

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N^o. 267.]

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1864.

[PRICE 2d.

QUITE ALONE.

BOOK THE FIRST: CHILDHOOD.

CHAPTER XXIX. LILY IS ACTUALLY AT HOME.

ONCE more Lily traversed the up-hill pavement, and marvelled at the great rolling turbulent gutters in the roadways: gutters which in those days often bore on their inky bosoms the carcasses of defunct cats and dogs, that rolled past, swift and supine, towards the Infinite reserved for the beasts.

Once more she saw the clumsy oil-lamps slung on ropes across the streets, and smelt the faint odour of the melons and peaches, and the quicker aroma of the grapes from the fruiterers' shops. The way was by back streets, where there were few brilliant shops, full of gold and silver and jewels, and rich dresses, and beautiful pictures. But to the timid little hermit, just escaped from her thralldom, the narrow dirty streets of old Paris were ineffably charming. The great dishes full of wet partly-cooked spinach, like green mortar, in the greengrocers' shops; the giant pumpkins at the doors, some cleft in twain, and disclosing a voluptuous mine of golden squash and seedfulness within, that looked like the heads of grim Paynim warriors stricken off by the two-handed swords of doughty Crusaders; the eggs boiled in cochineal (as Madame Prudence explained) to make their shells red: "c'est pour distraire l'œil, mon enfant," the long strings of dumpy little sausages, the shapely pigs' feet cunningly truffled, as though they had corns defiant of the skilfullest chiropodist; the other wonderful preparations of pork at the charcutiers'; the butchers' shops, with their marble dressers and gilt iron railings, and their scraggy but lively coloured show of meat; the glaring signboards; the dazzling show of pewter pitchers in the wine-shops; the ticket-porters dozing on their trucks, with their shirt-collars open, disclosing their shaggy, vein-corrugated necks; the throng of little boy soldiers with vacant faces and red legs; of priests in shovel-hats; of policemen with swords and cocked-hats; of moustached old women, very like the two Fates who came to card wool at the Pension, trolling monstrous barrows full of fruit or vegetables; the water-carriers with their pails; the alert little work-women with their trim white caps whisking along with their skirts thrown over one arm; the

wonderful poodle-dogs with tufted tails and curling manes, like pacific lions of a smaller growth; the liquorice-water seller with his pagoda at his back hung with bells and banners, and his clean napkin and arsenal of bright tin mugs; the woman who sold the jumbles, and the man who sold metal taps; the wandering glazier with his cry of "Vitrier-e-e-e-r!" the old clothesman, no Jew he, but a stout Christian, who looked as though he had spent a good many years travelling in Galilee, and had begun to waver in his faith somewhat, crying, "Vieux habits, vieux galons!" the very beggars and blackguard little boys in torn blue blouses, who splashed in the gutters, or made faces behind the backs of the cocked-hatted policemen; all had charms for Lily. She could not help observing that most of the surrounding objects—animate as well as inanimate—were exceedingly dirty, and that the atmosphere was heavily laden with tobacco-smoke; but the entire spectacle was charming to her, nevertheless.

By-and-by, in the wane of the afternoon (for they had walked leisurely, and Madame Prudence had met several acquaintances, the majority bearing large baskets from which the stalks of vegetables protruded, or the heads of fowls dangled, and who were manifestly of the culinary calling), they crossed the great roaring Boulevard—which the housekeeper told Lily was an ocean of wickedness, and to be avoided, save on feast-days, when the good people came out as well as the bad—and entered a maze of streets much wider and cleaner, but much quieter. There were few shops, but many white walls, seeming to stretch onward for miles, and relieved only by jalousied windows and heavy portes cochères. Lily's heart sank within her. All looked older; but then all was as still and as gloomy as the stark and sepulchral suburb of Saint Philippe du Roule.

"Does the good lady—does Madame de Ker-golay—keep a Pension?" she asked, nervously.

Madame Prudence could feel the little arm quivering within her own, and patted it again, reassuringly.

"Courage, my child!" she said, with a merry laugh. "Why, we have not the boldness of a guinea-pig. We have done with Pensions for good. No more classes, no more haricots, no more tasks and penitences, no more Marcassins! A Pension, my faith! Madame la Baronne de

Kergolay—a baroness, mind you, of the old stock, and not one of the day before yesterday—is a lady of ancient extraction, high rank, and ascertained position in society. She has had misfortunes, cruel and bitter misfortunes, but sooner than keep a Pension and suck the blood of young children, she would stand and sell matches at the corner of the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Yes, my child; suck their blood! That is what the Marcassin does. She is a real Count Ugolino."

A considerable period had apparently elapsed since Madame Prudence had perused the works of Dante. Lily, however, knew quite as little about Count Ugolino as the housekeeper did; and the assurance that Madame de Kergolay did not keep a school was quite sufficient for her.

The baroness lived in the Marais, in one of the tallest and oldest houses of that tall old quarter. It was a red brick house, too: almost as great a rarity in Paris as a stone house is in London. The entire mansion, Madame Prudence took care to inform Lily, belonged to the baroness: but she let it out in flats to respectable tenants, and reserved only one floor, the third, for her own use.

CHAPTER XXX. IN THE MARAIS.

If Madame de Kergolay had lived on a third floor in London, the altitude of her dwelling-place would have been accepted as *prima facie* conclusive evidence of her impoverished circumstances. But indigence, in Paris, does not necessarily correspond with the number of stairs you have to mount to your abode; and, although the baroness's apartment was au troisième, it was spacious, comfortable, and even elegant.

Madame Prudence was short-winded, and, as she toiled up the staircase, uttered sundry invectives against a certain "Satané" asthma which troubled her. The Abbé Chatain would not have failed to reprove her for using so naughty an adjective; and of this eventuality Madame Prudence seemed herself aware, for, on the second landing, she objurgated the asthma with bated breath, and apostrophised it only as a "Cosaque." But she was very glad to rest awhile on this penultimate flight, while Lily gazed with admiration through an *ciel-de-bœuf* casement on the vast panorama of slated roofs and chimney-stacks which stretched around and beneath her. The sweetly-savoured smoke from the wood fires curled in delicate violet hue against the clear blue sky; and the distant melody of a piano—played not as a school task, but for pleasure, for the instrumentalist carolled a lively ditty as he sang—came and smote her very sweetly on the ear. It was a simple matter to be pleased with, yet Lily felt as though she could have clapped her hands, and sung back again. Poor little creature! she had seen so little, as yet, of the only city in the world worth living in.

"I should like," she said, in airy prattle to her new found friend, "always to live here, and look

through that window. See, there is a woman hanging out linen on a roof. Oh, if there were only some birds. There used to be birds at Miss Bunycastle's."

"Bird yourself," rejoined the good-humoured housekeeper. "Silly little chatterer, you'd soon get tired of your bird's-eye view, I'll warrant. Yes, yes, there are better things to be seen within. Come! My respiration is a little restored. We will ring at the good lady's bell."

A lively piece of sculpture, in the likeness of a horse's forefoot, hung at the end of a silken cord by the side of a door whose central panel exhibited a brass plate, and, thereon, in very spiky and attenuated black letters, the words, "Madame la Baronne de Kergolay." Lily felt a slight tremor when she read "baroness." The remembrance of a former "countess" was rather conducive to a conviction on her part that she had had enough to do with titles of nobility for the term of her natural life.

A withered old man, very diminutive but with a very large head, and perhaps the thinnest pair of spindle-shanks ever seen out of a museum of anatomical preparations, opened the door, and grinned in a hospitable manner at the new comers.

"This is my brother Thomas," said Madame Prudence, introducing the little old man, "although you will oftener hear him addressed by his little name of Vieux Sablons. He is twenty years older than I; but in his youth was a furious gaillard. Even now il fait des farces. He is as upright as a dart, as strong as Hercules, and sain comme mon œil."

Thomas, otherwise Vieux Sablons, grinned so extensively while these praises were being bestowed on him that, in the mind of the timid, some fear might have arisen respecting the permanent cohesion of his superior and inferior jaws. This time, however, no divorce between the upper and lower portions of his head took place. The grin subsiding into a smirk, he shut the outer door behind the visitors, and ushered them into the interior of the premises.

Lily remarked that Thomas's large head, though quite bald on the summit, and very scantily furnished with thin locks about the ears, was plentifully powdered. He wore, moreover, earrings: at which, I take it, an English Jeames would have been astounded, if not scandalised. He was habited in a green livery coat, short in the waist, and shorter in the tails, shortest of all from a proportional point of view in the cuffs, and ornamented with a shoulder-knot of tarnished silver bullion. It was a coat worn to the very shabbiest, and scrupulously neat, and the large plated buttons had been so often polished that the armorial cognizance on them, as on a Louis the Fifteenth franc, was well-nigh defaced. Thomas's waistcoat had fallen likewise into the sere and yellow leaf—or, rather, the leaf that is sere without being yellow, for the original hue of the nankeen which formed its texture had,

through repeated ablutions, vanished. His green velvet nether garments, likewise, suggested to the observant spirit that they had originally formed the covering of a Utrecht sofa of the time of the First Empire, which had been very liberally sat upon by the beaux and belles of that epoch. He wore silk stockings of no particular colour, and, where they were not cobweb, his hose, like the late Sir John Cutler's, were one darn. Still, any little short-comings that might have been noticeable in his apparel were amply compensated by a prodigious pair of cut steel buckles in his shoes, and by a protruding shirt-frill or jabot: so white, so starched, and so stiff, that it gave him the appearance of a piece of Palissy-ware, cleaving with distended fin its way through life, like one of poor Bernard's perch through a dish.

"He wore that coat before the assembly of notables met," whispered Madame Prudence. "He was a running footman at Vieux Sablons. He has worn *l'épée au côté*—the sword by his side. Ah, the glad days!"

Anon they had passed through a cheerful dining-room with the usual floor of inlaid wood, light chintz hangings and furniture, and plenty of mirrors. At each of the three windows there was a glittering cage, and in each cage a canary was singing.

"Hao! it is better than the staircase," quoth Madame Prudence, slyly.

Lily thought so, indeed, when they came to the next room, the saloon, where the mirrors had richer frames—all tarnished, though—and where there were more birds, as many as four in a cage, and a beautiful globe full of gold and silver fish, and some stately pictures of ladies in hoops, and gentlemen with wigs and swords, and some older portraits of cavaliers in slouched hats and curled moustaches, and dames in ringlets and point lace. Here the furniture was of dark carved wood with elaborate cushions and backs in needlework.

"All Madame's doing," whispered the house-keeper. "She is an angel at her needle, but they were put together by the tapissier of the quarter. The old furniture was broken to pieces; the mirrors and the pictures my brother saved; but there's not a portrait without a bullet-hole or the gash of a knife in it, carefully mended; not a looking-glass frame but the glass itself has been smashed. What you see is nearly all that is left of the chateau of Vieux Sablons."

Again they went on, until Thomas, lifting up a heavy drapery of old tapestry veiling a door, tapped discreetly at it. His large head disappeared in the hangings, but he speedily withdrew it, and turned it towards the visitors with a reassuring grin.

"Madame will receive," he said. "She is not saying her breviary. Go in, my children."

Lily observed, as he retired, that, although he was as "upright as a dart," the gait of Vieux Sablons was very feeble, and he hobbled.

Madame Prudence seemed to divine the girl's thoughts.

"Yes," she said, with pleasant pride. "Thomas is of a certain age. He is no longer in his first youth. He is eighty, and for sixty-five years, man and boy, has been in the service of the family. But he is agile. Oh! he is alert. *Ma parole d'honneur*, I think he could dance the gavotte as well as Monsieur Vestris."

But here Madame Prudence was inwardly reminded that priests' housekeepers have no right to be critical on the execution of so mundane a performance as the gavotte, and she was for a moment covered with confusion. She muttered, however, something about the old thoughts that had come into her head through the presence of young people, and, pushing aside the drapery, led Lily in.

They found themselves in a neat smiling little room that was half boudoir and half bedchamber, the walls hung with antique tapestry in which shepherds and shepherdesses, brave with ribbons—for their very crooks and the necks of their sheep were hung with the parti-coloured products of the loom—were grinning as affably upon all comers as Thomas, yclept Vieux Sablons. Their smiles had somewhat faded from the stitches which years ago had been fixed in perpetual cachination by busy fingers now fleshless in the tomb, but they continued to grin valorously. As though there had really ever been such a place as Arcadia, as though the real names of Corydon and Phillis had not been Colin and Margot, who had pined in rags and penury, and fed on black bread (and, when that was scarce, on boiled grass), while the beaux in wigs had been writing epigrams to the belles in hoops at the tall-roofed chateau yonder. As though the chateau had never been burnt down by Corydons and Phillises infuriated by famine and oppression. As though there had never been a guillotine erected in permanency at the Mairie, a desecrated parish church, a broken cross, and a Reign of Terror. And the shepherds and shepherdesses went on smiling, in a third floor in the Marais, as they had once smiled in the great hall of Vieux Sablons.

There were more birds in this room; and their diversified twittering was, to tell truth, somewhat embarrassing to the newly-arrived stranger. One soon grew accustomed, however, to a riot which of all riots is the most tolerable. There was a dwarfish coffee-coloured pug-dog, too, of the breed called "carlin"—a detestable little beast with a red leather collar hung with bells, and a face like that of a negro pugilist (who had lost the fight) seen through the small end of an opera-glass. This pet and treasure yapped and japped about the room, and at first seemed inclined to cultivate a hostile acquaintance with Lily's ankles—dear me! how very late in the day I am in telling you that our solitary one had begun to have ankles, and that they were very shapely—but was soon recalled to order by a mild voice; a voice which addressed him now as "little tyrant," and now as "little cherished one."

On a cushion of tambour-work, which was moved about as the sun's rays affected different strips of the flooring, couched, grave and magisterial, and with a frill of fur like an Elizabethan ruff round his neck, a monstrous Angora cat. It was said, long ago, that no human being could ever have been as wise as Thurlow looked; but the impenetrable sagacity of the Angora's countenance would have reduced the chancellor, wig, seals, and all, to idiocy by contrast. The Angora cat's name was Miriflon.

In this room there was a handsome circular table of marqueterie, laden with books, with flowers, with needlework. There were cunning little green silk screens to subdue the light and the heat of the fire, which, notwithstanding the warmth of the weather, was crackling on the polished andirons of the roomy chimney. In a far-off alcove there was a bed: looking more, however, like a vast ottoman: with a faultlessly adjusted counterpane of quilted crimson silk.

By the work-table, a screen before her eyes, in a long low invalid chair, reclined a very old lady, whose hair was like undressed, but highly bleached, flax; whose lineaments seemed to have been cut in marble; whose complexion was soft and clear as virgin wax. Her hands, Lily noticed, were as white as the Marcassin's; but they were mild hands, gentle hands, innocent hands, hands that closed only when they were clasped in prayer, that opened only to give something away. She was clad in grey silk, and a kind of laced kerchief was tied under her head. She wore spectacles, and she had not a tooth in her head; but she looked, for all that, very like a saint.

"Kiss her, my child," whispered Madame Prudence.

Lily trembled all over: and, she scarcely knew why, her eyes filled with tears. Then, by an involuntary movement, she crept down to her knees, and took the lady's hand, which was soft and glossy, and, holding it between her own, gently kissed it.

The lady disengaged her hand and patted the brown curls nestling by her.

"And so you are to be my little pet bird," she said, in a low yet silvery shrill voice. "We are very good friends already, I can see. Monsieur l'Abbé has told me all about you. You have nothing to fear here, Lily Floris."

To Lily's inexpressible delight the lady spoke English—her own pure, sonorous, native tongue; at which Madame Prudence, not understanding a word, looked on in highly critical admiration.

Madame de Kergolay smiled at the girl's ill-concealed astonishment.

"Don't be afraid," she continued; "this is not a Pension Anglaise. You are surprised to hear me speak your language. Well, it is partly mine. I am English by descent, though not by birth. My grand-nephew, whom you will see some of these days (the scamp), is English from head to foot. Yes; I come of an English family—have you never heard of the Greyfaunts of

Lancashire? No, you are too young—but I was born in France. My father was exiled in the '45 for his attachment to the true king, and I was brought up by the English Benedictines—ah! the good sisters—in Paris; and when I left the convent I married Monsieur de Kergolay." She sighed as she spoke, and turned to a portrait supported on a little easel near her. It represented a handsome gentleman with powdered locks, but with a full dark moustache, who wore a white uniform coat with blue facings, and the cross of St. Louis at the button-hole. "Yes," the baroness murmured. "He was the bravest captain in his regiment, and the bravest gentleman in all Brittany. Nay, I libel them: the Bretons are all brave, and there is none bravest."

She was given to ramble sometimes in her discourse, and an unusual flow of volubility was succeeded by a silence somewhat blank. Madame Prudence beckoned Lily away.

"We will leave her a little while," whispered the good housekeeper. "She is easily fatigued. Madame is of a great age. Figure to yourself, my dear: eighty-six. She is weak, but ah! she has the courage of a Mousquetaire Gris in her."

"She is a very beautiful old lady, and I am sure she is good," Lily said, thoughtfully.

"You are right, little seer," returned the housekeeper, tapping the girl familiarly under the chin. "Beauty like hers laughs at time. Now it is a lantern, very clear and pellucid, through which her beautiful soul shines. The abbé says that she will be asked few questions on the great voyage. Her papers are all in order. Do you know that M. l'Abbé Edgeworth, who confessed the martyr king, gave her absolution himself when, with six of her old governesses, the Benedictines, she was mounting the fatal tumbril that was to convey her to the scaffold? And it was only by a miracle she escaped."

"Poor lady," murmured Lily. "How beautiful she must have been."

"Beautiful!" repeated Madame Prudence. "Ah! her beauty has gone through rude trials. Fire and famine and slaughter, insult and torture, captivity exile poverty, and hunger. And now, with the exception of her graceless grand-nephew, she is left quite alone."

"Why, I am quite alone too," quoth Lily, simply.

"Poor little lamb! I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. There! You are to be no longer alone. Madame la Baronne will love you very dearly, and Vieux Sablons will take as much care of you as though you were Azor the pug-dog, or Miriflon the cat, and I will come and see you whenever I can spare half an hour; and, bless my heart, here is Babette, the femme de chambre, who will show you the little room that is to be yours. And now, really, I must kiss you and bid you good-by, or my dear abbé will think I am lost."

And Madame Prudence, confiding Lily to the care of Babette, who was a homely woman of

middle age, with a port-wine stain on her face, was as good as her word, and bustled away.

Babette took Lily into a charming little bedroom, all rustling in white dimity draperies. Ah! so different from that dreadful hole at the Marcassin's. She showed Lily a coquettish little bed, and a wardrobe where her linen and clothes were arranged; and then, to the girl's great astonishment, the homely Babette sat down on the bed and began to cry.

"Don't mind me," she said in French, wiping her eyes. "I'm not going to hate you or to be jealous of you. But I am low-spirited this morning. Je pensais après mon homme là-bas: I was thinking about my husband, yonder."

Lily could not help thinking Babette a very strange woman, but she forbore to vex her by interruption.

"Is it through—" Babette was about to say "charity," but she checked herself; "is it pour l'amour du bon Dieu that you are going to stay with us?"

Lily felt herself blushing crimson, but she answered steadily: "I am quite alone, and poor, and was very unhappy where I lived, till M. l'Abbé Chatain brought me away: and I know that Madame de Kergolay is very charitable."

The homely woman had a brawny fist. She doubled it, and brought it down with a thump on the bed.

"Charitable?" she repeated. "She's a saint. Don't think I wish to shame you. I am the lowest of the low, a creature of shame, la dernière des dernières;" and she began to weep afresh.

Lily did her best to console her, but the most efficacious balsam to be applied to a wounded spirit seemed, in the case of the homely woman, to be the doubling of her fist again. She brought it down with renewed force on the counterpane.

"Look you well here, little one," she exclaimed. "This house has more mercy in it than the Hôtel-Dieu—than Bicêtre—than any house on earth. My man, my husband, it is very certain was a villain—Claude Gallifet, called Claquedents. An abominable man. Do you see that scar on my forehead? That was where he knocked me down with his adze, as a butcher knocks down the bœuf-gras. Observe it well. The blow went through my skull as though it had been of paper. Do you see this gap in my mouth? That is where Claquedents knocked three of my teeth down my throat. My breath is almost as short as the Dame Prudence's. But I have no asthma. I pant because Claude jumped on me, and broke two of my ribs. But I loved that man there. Do you understand?"

Lily was bewildered, and knew not what to say. She bowed her head.

"If he was bad," the woman continued, "I was bad. If he was a robber, I was a receiver of stolen goods. I tell you I loved him. Well! If he did commit the burglary by night, I helped him. I made the skeleton keys for him, and the list slippers, so that he should not be heard. Ce n'est

pas moi qui l'ai conseillé de tuer le bourgeois," she muttered, in a lower tone, and halted, and looked at Lily, and breathed hard.

The girl was shuddering.

"The bourgeois did not die," Babette went on, gloomily. "Otherwise, Claquedents would have been guillotined. Well, they sent him to Toulon for life. He is there now, with a red nightcap, and chained to another villain. N'en parlons plus."

"I was tried with him," she resumed. "They were merciful to me because I was a woman, and I had but two years' seclusion. I came out of prison to do what? To starve. 'Get up,' said the police one day. 'Lie down,' they cried the next. 'Go here, go there, where are your papers?' I had none, and no bread. I tell you I had no bread. They would not take me in at the hospital. I was so strong, they said. I had had a child. That died while I was in the prison. I begged a sou one night, and paid the toll on to the Pont des Arts to drown myself. The Abbé Chatain met me. He gave me money for a bed. He told Madame about me. I was received in an institution where saints, such as she, gather together wretches such as I. I worked very hard. I showed that I could be honest. Good God! I never stole anything but when I wanted bread, or when my man told me. At last I came here. I am housekeeper. I have the care of the plate. I could strangle Madame, who is as helpless as a child, when I put her to bed. Vieux Sablons does not know my story. The Dame Prudence, even, only knows, from the abbé, that I was poor. Nothing more. But I tell you—because you are young and have been miserable—think of me, and bless God that you ever came into this house."

"And your husband?" Lily said, lifting her great eyes in wonderment to the woman's face.

"Speak no more of him," she returned. "If he were to escape, or to be released, I declare that I would kill myself. I love him, and a month after we had met we should be at the Dépôt of the Préfecture again, for robbery. You will never hear anything more about this from me. Go! I see you are good. I am not about to be jealous of you." And Babette got off the bed, smoothed out the indentations made by her fist, and very composedly proceeded to fill the ewer from a large brass pitcher.

When Lily was left alone, she ventured to open the wardrobe, and found that the mean and patched apparel she had brought from the Pension Marcassin had been supplemented by a store of linen, morning wrappers, and other feminine gear, which, to her unaccustomed eyes, appeared inexpressibly spruce and smart. There was little finery among the stock; there were neither silks nor satins; but to the whilom Cinderella the few drawers seemed to contain the treasures of the Indies. She had never seen such nice clothes since the well-remembered afternoon when Cutwig and Co. fitted her out.

Presently came Vieux Sablons with a tap at

her door, to tell her, with as conciliatory a grin as usual, that Madame would again receive her. She followed him, timidly, but with a happy reliance gradually growing upon her. Everything told her that in this house she had nothing to fear.

Madame de Kergolay bade Lily come very close, and kissed her on the forehead.

"I am a very weak suffering old woman, my darling," she said, "and constant pain makes me cross and irritable, sometimes. When I scold you (which will not be often, I hope), you must smile and kiss me. When I scold Vieux Sablons, he rubs the buttons of his coat with his sleeve; which relieves him. Formerly he used to whistle, but I prohibited that, as an impertinence. And now you must sit down on that little stool by my feet, and tell me everything about yourself. I need not ask you for the truth. It is written in your face."

It was, indeed. The girl drew the stool close to the old lady's chair, and, her brown curls nestling amongst the draperies of her protectress, told, in artless simplicity, the short and sorrowful story of her life. There were no startling incidents, no romantic episodes. It was a mean, common-place little tale; but Madame de Kergolay shed tears as she listened to it.

"You have been very unhappy, my child," she began, when Lily had ended. "Let us pray that the dark days are over, and that the bright time is coming. In His inscrutable wisdom and mercy, the Almighty is often pleased to afflict most sorely those of His creatures who seem least deserving of his anger. You have had, indeed, to suffer two most terrible deprivations. No father to protect, no mother to cherish and fondle you! Ah! poor little lamb! my heart bleeds for you. But we must see what a feeble, bedridden invalid can do to console you; yes, we must try to make you as happy as the day is long."

"There is only one thing that I am afraid of, madame," faltered Lily.

"And what is that, my child?"

"If the lady—the strange lady—the one who was called countess—should find me out? If she went to Mademoiselle Marcassin's, and discovered where I was! Oh! it would be dreadful."

"Foolish little thing. After deserting you so long, it is not probable that she will care to inquire about you. If she be indeed your mother, she must be a cruel and hard-hearted woman—a scandal to her sex. But I cannot believe that any mother could be so inhuman. No, no; she must be some wicked and intriguing woman, who, to further bad designs of her own, has been endeavouring to alienate you from your real parents. Let us think no more about her. Justice, divine or human, must, sooner or later, overtake a creature so abandoned. Let us indulge in hopes, rather, that some day the two gentlemen who placed you at the school at Clapham, and one of whom must have been your father, may be met with. But, until they do come forward, and under any circumstances, you are not the less to be my dear adopted child."

They had much converse that afternoon; and an impertinent little alabaster clock on the mantelpiece had proclaimed, in a voice very much resembling the barking of a very weak little puppy, that it was six o'clock, when Vieux Sablons (who had bestowed a fresh sprinkling of powder on his bald pate in honour of the occasion) announced that Madame was served, and that dinner was ready.

Madame, alas! could not walk to her evening meal; but as she obstinately refused to be treated so much like an invalid as to be served in her bedchamber, she was slowly wheeled in her chair to the *salle-à-manger*. The six o'clock dinner was one of the few links that bound her to the every-day world; and, whether she dined alone or in company, the ceremonious announcement of the banquet was made by Vieux Sablons, and her modest repast was served up in the apartment specially provided for the purpose.

The dinner was a very simple, but a very nice one. They had a soup with bread in it, a little of the gravy beef with a sharp sauce, a couple of dishes of vegetables, a roast chicken, and some cream cheese. The only evidences of luxury were in the wine, which was a rare and odoriferous Bordeaux, and in the dessert, at which a magnificent melon made its appearance. Everything pertaining to the service of the table was scrupulously clean, and of originally costly material, but everything had plainly seen better days. The tablecloth and napkins were damask, but worn to the cord, and as elaborately darned as Vieux Sablons's stockings. The plate was silver, but rubbed to the last degree of thinness. The dessert porcelain was old Sèvres, but cracked and riveted in dozens of places. Every article, in fact, from the napkin-holders to the salad-bowl, seemed to have undergone some terrible shipwreck, but to have been rescued from the wreckers' hands, and carefully put together again.

Vieux Sablons was footman, and butler, and parlour-maid. He solemnly drew the bottle of Bordeaux, and presented the encrimsoned cork on a battered little salver of silver to his mistress, who examined and dismissed it approvingly, saying that the good Haut Brion showed, as yet, no signs of deterioration. He carved the melon with a silver knife and fork in a very imposing manner, and brought on the two silver sconces containing lighted candles of yellow wax, with an air worthy of a sacristan, or of a gentleman of the chamber to the Great King.

"We do things pretty well in a third floor of the Marais, *hein, little ma'amselle?*" he remarked, with pardonable complacency, as he lighted Lily to her chamber.

The girl said that everything was beautifully comfortable.

"With regard to comfort," replied Vieux Sablons, slightly piqued, "I don't care about it. I know it not, the comfortable. It concerns me not. It belongs to the revolutionaries. I alluded to the style. Do you approve of it?"

Lily hastened to assure him that she regarded the style as perfect.

"That's right, little ma'amselle," returned the ancient servitor, nodding his head in grave satisfaction. "We are au troisième, it is true, but still we perform our functions here in the way they were performed before the evil times. The bulk of our fortune, alas! we have lost, but we contrive to exist, and to keep up our style on crumbs. You see that our forks and spoons are still of silver?"

Yes, Lily had noticed that.

"The days have been," Vieux Sablons continued, "when I have had the honour to serve Madame and her guests entirely off silver, ay, and off silver-gilt. But what would you have? The accursed revolution has ruined all. The Gauls triumph. Poor France!"

"Poor Madame de Kergolay!" murmured Lily, softly.

"You are right, my child," said the old man. "We keep up our style, and there is that scamp of a grand-nephew, and Madame is an angel to the poor, and all upon ten thousand francs a year. And the manor of Vieux Sablons alone was once worth a million."

"A million!" echoed Lily, who had scarcely ever heard of so large a sum of money.

"A million! 'Tis I who say it to you. Now we are reduced to ten thousand miserable francs. The appointments of an employé, quoi! But I tell you what," the old man, in his thin pipe continued, clenching a trembling hand; "the day that our funds begin to fail us, and Madame says, 'Vieux Sablons, we must sell the silver,' and dine with one course instead of three, or I shall have no bread to give to my poor, that day I will beg, that day I will thief for the House of Kergolay."

"But Madame would be angry," Lily gently pleaded.

"Very well, very well. I have another resource. I will go to a bureau de remplaçants and sell myself as a substitute for one drawn in the conscription. That is a thousand francs. France always wants men; and I am strong—oh! I am strong yet. Good night, little ma'amselle."

Poor Vieux Sablons! He was nearly eighty, and would not have made, I fear, a very stalwart grenadier.

THE FENIAN BROTHERS.

Nor long ago a meeting was held in the Rotundo at Dublin to express the indignation of Young Ireland at a vote of the Dublin corporation, which gave a site upon College-green for a statue to the late Prince Consort. But although Young Ireland was left in quiet possession of that meeting, it did not choose to be quiet. There was no proud Saxon to lay low, so, at the mention of a name welcome to some patriots, but unwelcome to others, uprose a band of Fenians, tore off the legs of chairs and tables, smartly

applied them to the heads of brother patriots, carried the platform by storm, and waved triumphantly the green tablecloth of Erin over a mad hullabaloo. This was a grand exhibition of the materials for that peculiar joint-stock society, "the Fenian Brotherhood," promoted by a few sharpers for the profitable cultivation of Irish flats. Appeal is made to the unreasoning love of a row still common among the uneducated Irish. The Irish faction against the English faction! Whew! what a grand fight it'll be! It would "electrify the world," says the editor of the Chicago Fenian, and it would be "one of the grandest events in history, because it would necessarily involve the overthrow of an Imperial system greater than any the world has seen since the fall of the Roman, perhaps greater than the Roman itself." If Hungary overthrew Austria, he goes on to show, five centuries hence, general history would give only five pages to the fact. If Poland overthrew Russia, five pages would be more than enough to tell that tale: But the overthrow of the British Empire, that would be grand indeed! The day Irishmen humble the haughty crest of England, they chain the glory of Ireland for ever to the stars. To this eloquent prophecy is added, "Who can doubt the ultimate success of a cause, the undying faith in which is cherished in the hearts of a people from father to son, and evident by acts time and again significant as the following:—" The following fact being, that the brothers John Patrick and Edward Gaffney have sent to the Irish National Fair, Chicago, "two pairs of boots, patent leather and morocco tops." Surely these patent leather boots of the Gaffneys, wherewith England is defied, are sublimer than the boots of Bombastes, that were not chained to the stars, but only hung from a tree:

Whoever dare these boots displace,
Must meet BOMBASTES face to face!

But what is the Irish National Fair, Chicago, to which it is so glorious a thing to have sent two pairs of patent leather boots with morocco tops? Well; Chicago, on Lake Michigan, at the mouth of the Chicago River, is the chief city of Illinois, of which the growth during the last thirty years has been so rapid as to be wonderful even in America. Ten years ago it was the largest primary grain dépôt in the world, and its population, now of about a hundred and ten thousand, has trebled since that time. It trades with three thousand miles of coast line on the lakes, and has navigable water communication with the Mississippi and the sea: so that it can load a vessel at its wharves either for New Orleans or for Liverpool. Among the Irishmen in this town of Chicago, the "Fenian Brotherhood" professes to have its head-quarters. Here, certain flats and sharpers held in November last what was called the "First General Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood," whereto they resolved that this "Brotherhood" should be a fixed and permanent institution in America, with a head centre, state centres, and centres of circles; and that the object of its members should be "to gird their loins silently and

sternly for the inevitable struggle that is approaching." This organisation in Chicago is opposed by the bishop of the Irish Catholics, as it is opposed in Ireland and America by the main body of the bishops and priests of the Irish Catholic Church, except only a few men like Father Lavelle, who described Prince Albert at the Rotundo meeting as "a German reviler of our creed and country, and the husband of a foreign queen." Oppressed as their Church truly is by a dominant Protestant establishment, which is the genuine cause of more than half the bad blood of the country, its honest efforts to check the "Young Irish" party in its wild course of sedition have been unintermitting, and made at some sacrifice of popular influence. Let us give to faithful servants of Christ who are not of our own communion, the honour due to them herein for Christian work. The Chicago Fenians scout the admonitions of their Bishop Duggan. "When the old world harness," says one magnificent spirit, "is attempted to be buckled tightly upon the Americanised Catholic mind, and the gear once fails, as in the case of the Fenians, it may as well be returned to the lumber-room, or used only for docile females and quiet old men, who from long training will not grow restive in the traces. We regard the Fenians as having achieved their first great step in the elevation of Irish nationality, by teaching a lesson to the priesthood which they will never forget, and the first of a series which, once taken, the rest will follow." The Americanised Irish sharper fully developed into a Fenian leader, is a most eloquent creature; "rough he is, so air our bars; wild he is, so air our buffaloes; but his glorious answer to the tyrant and the despot is, that his bright home is in the setting sun." Hear, for example, one of the two great managers of Fenian finance at Chicago, Messrs. Michael and John Scanlan, proposing at a "Fenian banquet," on Saint Patrick's Day, "the Day we Celebrate" (spelling is not one of the strong points of the Chicago Fenian and National Fair Gazette, wherefrom we quote), hear him tell how "our glorious pagan ancestry, rising above the things of earth, plucked the very sun from heaven, placed it in their banner, and marched to victory beneath its beams," or hear him praise the United States, and quote the Americanised Shakespeare. "States, where men walk earth in the light of freedom, with nothing twixt their souls and heaven, until the kings and titled nobility of earth appear as pigmies,

Cutting up such fantastic pranks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep."

All hail to Messrs. Michael and John Scanlan! These seem to have been the gentlemen who got up the other day at Chicago a Fenian Irish National Fair, which began on Easter Monday, and was to have a season of a week. There were sold for a dollar apiece season tickets of admission. "One dollar," said the announcement, "one dollar will aid the holiest cause that ever engaged the heart and brain of man," besides

giving a chance of winning one of a thousand prizes to be drawn for: a rosewood piano, a diamond-cased lady's gold hunting-watch, a fine French clock, a silver plated tea set, a meerschaum pipe, a sewing-machine, a dozen fiddles, five boxes of Havanas, two dozen sets of heavy plated spoons, or a marble bust of General Corcoran. Gifts of all kinds were to be sent from all parts for sale at the Fenian Fair, and the proceeds—ah, well, they would be invested in U. S. bonds until wanted.

These patriotic people call themselves a "Fenian Brotherhood," because Irish tradition says that the Fenians were an old national militia employed to protect the Irish coasts from all foreign invaders. Each of the four provinces is said to have had its band or clan, Fionn and Oisín (Fingal and Ossian) being chiefs of one of the clans with which the other clans fought, till the institution came to its end pretty much in the same way as the meeting did the other day in the Rotundo. But there were Fenians in Scotland and North Germany as well as in Ireland, and, in fact, there is good reason to suppose that they were a distinct tribe of those Celts who preceded the Germanic races in occupation of the North German and Scandinavian shores. No matter for that. Tradition connects them with the best of the early Irish poetry as the home militia and coast-guard, composed of men of miraculous attainments: so nimble that they could walk over rotten sticks without breaking them: so fleet that each of them could outstrip in the race all "the rest" of his comrades: so brave that any one of them counted it equal battle to fight nine of any other nation. So here we have the Fenians again, though the boldest of them don't hold by the old traditional rule that prevented her militia from passing out of Ireland; and in America they take one John O'Mahony to be their Finn M'Coul.

The professed object of this band of brothers is the national freedom of Ireland. The congress of November last, began by proclaiming its determination to uphold the laws and constitution of the United States; it then went on to say that, in consequence of the hostile attitude assumed by the English oligarchy, merchants, and the press, towards the United States since the beginning of the civil war, hostilities between the two countries is imminent; and they resolved that the younger members of the Brotherhood be drilled so as to be prepared to offer their services to the United States when these begin their war with England. Ireland at present being the vanguard of America against British aggression, "her organised sons keeping watch and ward for the United States at the thresholds of the despots of Europe, nay in their very citadels," it was resolved that the Brotherhood is open to every man who is loyal to the principles of self-government, and will oppose the emissaries of foreign despotisms who would feign (Fenian spelling again) crush the growth of republican principles, and stop the onward march of freedom. The preamble to another

resolution admits the existence of dissension among the Brotherhood, and it is therefore resolved that American politics and religious questions shall be excluded from their councils. It asserts that it is not a secret, nor an oath-bound, society; and, as certain circles have adopted a form of pledge capable of giving colour to a contrary assertion, the following form is recommended for general adoption:

"I — solemnly pledge my sacred word and honour as a truthful and honest man, that I will labour with earnest zeal for the liberation of Ireland from the yoke of England, and for the establishment of a free and independent government on Irish soil; that I — will implicitly obey the commands of my superior officers in the Fenian Brotherhood; that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my membership, as laid down in the Constitution and By-Laws thereof; that I will do my utmost to promote feelings of love, harmony, and kindly forbearance among all Irishmen; and that I will foster, defend and propagate the aforesaid Fenian Brotherhood to the utmost of my power."

The statement that the Brotherhood is not a secret or oath-bound society, put forth to evade, if possible, the opposition of the Irish clergy, can hardly be reconciled with a subsequent admission that there is an "inner circle," an unnamed council of ten, who direct the proceedings of the Brotherhood, and who are not called upon "to make any report as to the methods and means by which they are endeavouring to carry forward the avowed ends of the Brotherhood." The Bishops of Pennsylvania and Chicago having denounced the Brotherhood, a deputation was appointed to wait on the latter, with whom a conversation took place, much too long to be given even in substance. The bishop, however, said that they had a most atrocious oath, and for that reason he had refused to send their contributions in aid of the poor in Ireland. That Archbishop McHale had accepted this money sent through another channel did not surprise him, on the contrary, it would have surprised him if he hadn't. The bishop further said that Mr. Smith O'Brien was opposed to such societies; that the leaders of the Brotherhood were unknown to him, that their actions "are not sufficiently before us to know what they are doing. *And we do not know what is done with the money raised in this society.*" The italics occur in the report. Finally, the bishop pronounced that the British government in Ireland is a legal government, and that it is a crime against the Church to attempt to overthrow it.

As to the sentiments and present position of the Irish race abroad and at home, we are told that it is pervaded by a profound love of Ireland, and "by an intense and undying hatred towards the monarchy and oligarchy of Great Britain, which have so long ground their country to the dust, hanging her patriots, starving out her people, and sweeping myriads of Irish men, women, and children off their paternal fields, to

find a refuge in foreign lands," and that the best way of gratifying the hatred of Great Britain is, for Irishmen to cultivate brotherly feeling, good will, and mutual forbearance. Fenians who are not yet aware of the fact, will be glad to learn that the "men of Irish birth and lineage now dwelling on the American continent, hold, at present, a more powerful position among the peoples of the earth, in point of numbers, political privileges, social influence and military strength, than was ever before held by any exiled portion, not alone of the Irish nation, but of any subjugated nation whatsoever;" while in the very same document they are told that, "in the hard battle of the exile's life the race is dying out, and the present moment is that in which the Irish element has reached its greatest development." The final resolution is given in the boldest type, and runs thus: "THAT WE DECLARE THE SAID IRISH PEOPLE TO CONSTITUTE ONE OF THE DISTINCT NATIONALITIES OF THE EARTH, AND AS SUCH JUSTLY ENTITLED TO ALL THE RIGHTS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT."

But this absurd society must be more numerous in America than an Englishman with fair regard for Irish sense would imagine, or we should not have Mr. Blair, the Postmaster-General of the United States, writing to the Secretary in this style:

"Washington, February 9th, 1864.

"Cor. Sec. I. N. Fair.

"DEAR SIR,—Herewith I send you a cheque for twenty-five dollars as a small contribution to the Irish National Fair. I have always sympathised warmly with Ireland, and rejoice in the conviction, which daily grows stronger, that the days of her oppressor—the haughty and heartless British aristocracy, are numbered. To the cold-blooded, calculating policy of this odious class we owe the planting of slavery on this continent, and consequently all the horrors we have witnessed in the war which now shakes the continent. Let us triumph in this struggle, and there will soon be an end put to the sway of the oppressors of Ireland, and both parties so understand it, for whilst the Irish with the gallant Mulligan, Meagher, and other true sons of Ireland are armed for the cause of free government, the British aristocracy, with scarcely an exception, openly sympathise with the rebels, and this, notwithstanding their affected horror of slavery, for the perpetuation of which the rebels are fighting.

"Yours truly,
"M. BLAIR."

The governor of Illinois writes in a similar strain, and Fernando Wood, the member of the House of Representatives, sends a cheque for a hundred dollars, and says: "I would give all I am worth, if, by so doing, I could advance the cause of Irish nationality to a successful completion." The Hon. Fernando probably means all he possesses. His expression, carried out literally, would not add much to the funds of the society. The senator from Michigan gives his sympathy to the movement. The governor of

Minnesota sends a contribution with a letter, in which he says he is "for the freedom and nationality of Ireland." Colonel Mulligan, writing from the Head-Quarters of the Second Division, sends a hundred dollars, and will, when the union of the States is solidly settled, give his assistance in establishing Irish nationality. Brigadier-General Julius White, writing with exceeding bitterness against those statesmen who rise in their Legislative Halls (meaning the British Houses of Parliament) and encourage and defend the traitorous villains who are making America flow with blood, prophesies that Irishmen fighting Freedom's battle shall yet hear its thunders on their native shore. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is a contributor to the amount of twenty dollars. Major-General Pleasanton is another; so also is Brigadier-General Montgomery, whose donation is accompanied with the charitable hope that, "with the blessings of Providence, not only our individual but national efforts may teach England a salutary lesson of retribitional justice, resulting in securing to Ireland the inalienable boon, &c." Sundry soldiers of the United States army do not limit the testimony of their sympathy to mere words, but send contributions ranging in amount from one to five dollars.

A great meeting of the Brotherhood was held in California, at which a Mr. Mooney acknowledged that he had always found Englishmen hospitable, just, and generous, but, as regards Ireland, that "every year the people raise abundant food from their soil—but every year the ships of her oppressors come into her harbours, and, like buccaneers, carry off by force the food which Providence has planned in her rich soil for her inhabitants, and her people are obliged to put round the hat in helpless mendicancy to the world. But they have vowed on the top of Slivenamon, in Ireland, to beg food no longer, to petition the Queen of England no longer, but to arise, organise, and on the gory field assert their independence. They may rise or they may fall, but they will never beg again. (Great cheering.) Mr. Mooney said he was good for one rifle, and there were twenty thousand Irishmen in California who could and would each of them send a rifle to Ireland, yea, even their brave hearts." He concluded a stirring address by suggesting "an immediate commencement of the work, and the sending to the fair at Chicago a golden brick and a few silver bricks of California metal. (Cheers.)"

At this meeting it was announced that Miles D. Sweney was willing to contribute one thousand dollars to the cause. This was the signal for a great outburst of applause, and "three cheers were given for Miles, who was immediately voted the bulliest of the contributors." In return for a contribution of five hundred and seven dollars from the Ninetieth Illinois Regiment, the editor of the Fenian prays that "when the terrible day of reckoning with England comes, God in his infinite goodness may vouchsafe that these noble veterans may have the full measure of their desire granted—to be in at the settle-

ment." The men of another regiment are only waiting the termination of the American war to "flesh their bayonets in corpulent Mr. Bull."

Among the articles contributed by Ireland to the fair are three photographic portraits by the venerable Archbishop McHale; "a Whole Irishman" sends a moire antique gent's vest; others send a piece of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's coffin; a pocket-handkerchief; an Irish MS.; a few numbers of Punch; sundry '98 pikes and shille-lahs; a jar of whisky which had not paid the excise duty; a bog-oak negligé; a copy of a letter from France on Irish bravery; a sword picked up on Bunker's Hill by an Irish-English soldier; a pistol used in '98; a lump of stone, on which the broken treaty was signed by the illustrious Sarsfield; a bird's-eye view of the Protestant Reformation; a pair of lady's boots worked with a '98 pike; a Scotch claymore taken in Wexford in '98; a large doll, dressed as the Tipperary man's dark-haired Mary; a sod off Wolf Tone's grave; a watch-pocket, worked by a lady who hopes that it will be worn next a manly heart, that fondly throbs for Fatherland; a portrait of St. Patrick; a horn of a Mangerton stag; a bit of the Atlantic cable; a photograph of Emmett in one of his pensive moods; a pair of rose-coloured cork slippers; a flag, which "has been noticed by some of our alien rulers in both Houses of Parliament as a most rebel flag, with language in an unknown tongue;" a gross of pies "specially manufactured for the fair;" a curious bone, found on the island of Inchidanny; "the crowbar used by the drummer bailiff when he headed the crowbar brigade in this district in the years '46-'48." This is the gift of one of the brigade, who has repented of his share in the cruel work of desolation, by which so many a cheerful homestead has been left a sightless ruin, and numbers of people have been driven from their homes, and forced to fly to foreign lands or to the workhouse, where at that time certain death awaited them. There has been sent also a grand blackthorn stick cut from over the graves of the ancient Britons buried in Ireland. A large number of odd volumes of books were contributed. "Donations of food in any quantity," it was announced, "will be gratefully received. Beef, mutton, lamb, veal, bacon, ham, pork, sausages, fowls, turkeys, geese, chickens, game, raw or cooked, fish and vegetables of all sorts, cakes and pickles, fruit and vinegar, anything, in fact, that will tend to the comfort of the visitors and the increase of the receipts, and the further it has to travel and the greater the quantity, the more highly it will be valued."

The fair was to be opened by the governor of Illinois, and for the entertainment of visitors there were to be theatrical performances, concerts, lectures, &c. &c. "Ireland's gifted daughter," Miss T. Esmonde, was to give poetical and patriotic readings; "the soldier and patriot," T. F. Meagher, to make an address; and "the committee were also negotiating for, and hoped to be able to conclude the necessary arrangements to give a grand billiard

tournament by those celebrated Irish knights of the cue, Messrs. Phelan, Cavanagh, Tieman, and Foley;" while mere sight-seers might have the gratification of visiting Colonel White's museum, where "they will see two millions of curiosities, including the invisible lady."

All this sounds very comical, but there is a tragic side of it, not, indeed, for England, but for the warm-hearted people among the untaught masses of Ireland, who are thus misled. The Fenian chiefs are themselves no better taught than the majority of sharpers. They write about "blessings and boquets," and "auxiliary entertainments," and everywhere, in distorted ill-spelt language, scatter their wicked perversions of the truth. What Irishman of moderate intelligence does not know how heartily England strove to allay the distresses of the Irish famine of 1847-8, yet thus a "smart" Fenian ventures to play on the credulity of his poor victims:

"England, with the cold, malignant ingenuity of an incarnate fiend, has laid down the sword for the *famine*, and the fire for the *pestilence*, and with these agents, these purely English agents, has now reduced our destruction to the certainty of a mathematical problem. Four or five years of such successful famine as 1847-8 would have rid England of all her troubles. But the destruction was too horrible. The world stood appalled at a whole nation perishing of want in the midst of plenty, and the plan was modified to suit the advanced civilisation of the age, and at the present rate it will take fourteen or fifteen years to blot the Irish race from its native land. Oh! countrymen, it was not thus in the days when the men of Ireland, with their keen battle-axes and trusty swords, defended the fields they cultivated and manured them with the corpses of the invaders."

Eighty years ago, Sir Jonah Barrington said of his countrymen, that "nine-tenths of the whole population would rather fight than let it alone." And the love of fighting somebody or anybody, still appears stronger in Irishmen in Ireland than it does elsewhere; no matter when or where or what about, they are always ready. One the other day knocked down his comrade without provocation, and on being asked by him, "Pat, what did you strike *me* for?" replied, "Shure, Mick, and ef I struck you myself, I wouldn't let any other man do it." One may observe them at either race, or fair, or pattern, sitting as uncomfortable as possible when all is quiet, turning suddenly at the slightest noise, as if it might be the happy forerunner of a blow, and apparently grudging every minute that slips by, as if they thought it was all lost time when not

Fighting like devils for conciliation,
And hating each other for the love of God.

In days gone past we had Ribbonmen and Whiteboys, with their Captains "Starlight," "Moonlight," and other more ominous names, and now we hear of the drilling that goes on after dark in different parts of Ireland, sticks representing muskets, with which Fenian volunteers go through the "manual and platoon

exercise," march and counter-march, form line, and from that close column, and then deploy again. We all know that in the month of February, Irishmen were dressed in American uniforms, that they showed themselves so attired in public, and were said to be members of the Fenian Brotherhood, and there are thousands of men, Fenians at heart, who did not appear in uniform. We know, also, that hundreds have been drilling in various parts of the south of Ireland, and when more offensive weapons are convenient, the former drilling with shillelaghs will render them certainly the more dangerous. The Dublin correspondent of the Times wrote on the 23rd February: "I learn that a number of the most intelligent and respectable among the mechanics in this city are enrolled in the 'Brotherhood of St. Patrick,' and they are avowedly training an army to co-operate with the Americans when they come to invade this country." True as it is that no Fenian army, even if it sailed from the American shores, would ever reach this side of the Atlantic, it is not folly to see and lament that these poor men have become tools of designing fanatics.

All that the Irish Fenians require to make them able to do much murder is a stock of ammunition, and two or three thousand muskets. There might then be mischief enough done within any twenty-four hours, for plenty of powder and guns are within reach, and to be had almost for the fetching.

Should the stranger, after seeing the principal sights of Dublin, feel inclined to have a closer look at the harbour defence, he can get on a car at the Monument in Sackville-street, cross over Carlisle Bridge, pass the theatres, and on to Irishtown, through Ring's End, after which he will be driven over a narrow road, on a long spit of land which runs into the sea for about a mile and a half, and where it widens, a little near the extremity, he will find the Pigeon House Fort. When he gets near to the fort he will observe upon his left the remains of H.M.S. Mermaid, brought here from Portsmouth, cut down and converted into a store. Then comes a row of wooden palisading, and next a draw-bridge, crossing which, and passing under a gateway, he will find himself in a small courtyard, with cannon pointed, commanding the road he has come; then through another gateway, and he will be in an oblong square, where he will find a flagstaff and a couple of thirty-two pounders. The ball-alley, canteen, and barracks, are on the right, further on is a long building. Beyond that again is a large yard, girt by iron railings, in the centre of which are piled shot of all sizes, and cannon of nearly every calibre lie round about. Then come the officers' quarters, a large commodious building in which no officer lives, and next to this are the magazines, the powder depôt for the whole of Ireland, where there are some tons of gunpowder deposited, also Congreve rockets, shrapnel shells, canister and grape, and ammunition of every sort, blank and ball, for Enfield and Whitworth rifles, and the same for Armstrong guns. The next house

is the barrack-master's, which, like the lawyer's house in a village, is far from being the worst in the place; and then comes another small guard-room, and another gateway leading on to the breakwater. When returning, he will observe a small landing-place to the right, used for the unloading of ammunition, &c., which is conveyed from Woolwich in government vessels. From this landing-place to the entrance there is only a wall looped about every forty yards for defence. The most interesting object is the armoury, the long building already mentioned, entrance to which may be gained by application to the head clerk; it is said to be the next in importance to Woolwich, and a regular staff of workmen is employed here. Entering from the front by folding-doors, the stranger finds himself in a small hall facing a staircase about eight feet wide. In and round this hall are numerous articles used in ancient warfare, coats of mail and suits of armour of every kind, from that of the knight to the mousquetaire, while pikes, battle-axes, and blunderbusses adorn the walls, and festoons of bayonets, wreaths of pistols, and stars formed of small-swords and daggers, decorate the sides of the staircase. Up the stairs is a long wide room, at the end of which another room similar in size branches off to the right; here again the walls are covered with "pikes and guns and bows, and good old swords and bucklers too," while in every window-ledge is displayed the model of a cannon or some other destructive engine of war. Down the middle of these rooms, in tier upon tier, are over thirty thousand Enfield and Whitworth rifled muskets, with bayonets to match, besides more than a thousand six-barrelled revolver pistols. In this building are arms for an army, and not one hundred yards from them is the ammunition.

Here is then, quite handy when required, just what the Brothers of St. Patrick want, nicely laid out for them to take away. Not a house is within a mile of the outside of the fort, there is no thoroughfare in that direction, no telegraph wire even in case of fire to intimate the fact to the Dublin authorities. There are only five sentinels posted in and round the fort, or a guard of fifteen men with two corporals and a sergeant. During the summer months there are, in addition to these, about eighty men usually stationed there for musketry instruction; but it is a standing order in the fort for all the ammunition to be collected from the men as soon as they enter it and given into store, and eighty men without ammunition are less formidable than a dozen men with it.

Within a few miles are the Wicklow mountains, where a couple of thousand Fenians could easily assemble, although one-tenth of that number would be sufficient. Then, if a small steamer with two or more good sized boats were chartered from some Irish port, say Dundalk or Belfast, and sailing thence ostensibly bound for Glasgow, were to make for some unfrequented part of the Wicklow coast, and there lie to, until two or three hundred "Brethren" got on board from the shore in the ship's boats; then about mid-

night, if that vessel were to slip through Dublin Bay, quietly steam past the lighthouse until opposite to the small landing-place where the warlike stores are embarked and disembarked, stop there, lower a boat, send it with half a dozen men and muffled oars to surprise and gag the sentry—not a very difficult matter when his musket is unloaded—what might follow?

TO HIS LOVE:

WHO HAD UNJUSTLY REBUKED HIM.

GENTLE as Truth, and zealous even as Love—

Which is the fiercest of all earthly things;

Frank, and yet using caution as a glove

To guard the skin from foulnesses or stings,—

Giving the bare hand surely to the true:

Such would I be, to make me worthy you.

Bitter sometimes, as wholesome tonics are;

Wrathful as Justice in her earnest mood;

Scornful as Honour is, yet not to bar

Appreciation of the lowest good;

Hating the vile, the cruel, the untrue:

How should my manhood else be worthy you?

Say I am subtil, fierce, and bitter-tongued:

Love is all this, and yet Love is beloved.

But say not that I wilfully have wrong'd

Even those whose hate and falsehood I have proved.

Who say this know me not, and never knew

What I would be, but to be worthy you.

FALSE HOPE.

GOD save me from mine enemy,

I pray we ne'er may meet again.

She has been worse than foe to me:

And yet, if we should meet again

I should believe her to my bane.

She has been worse than foe to me,

With promised love and present pain,

Till love seem'd only injury,

And troth was known to be in vain:

I did believe her, to my bane.

Her clear eyes look'd so lovingly,

She clung with such a hearty strain,

Her lips—so sweet, so sweet to me—

Left upon mine a poison blain:

I did believe her, to my bane.

She has been worse than foe to me:

Yet I should love her o'er again

If we should meet—dear Injury!

Men call her Hope—but she is Pain.

Pray God we may not meet again!

WHO ARE THEY?

I go a great deal about London alone, and, having no one to talk to, I consequently talk to myself; I do not mean audibly or visibly, but to that inner self which we all carry about with us, like a leaden image or a silver one, as the case may be. And I generally talk of the people I see, say in omnibuses or at the theatre, wondering who they are, and what their social condition, and how they live, and what the great whirling wheels of life are doing for them in that big workshop of fate where the patterns of

our several looms are being wrought. And, by long habit in these speculations, it seems to me that I have acquired an extraordinary insight into the lives of those I meet; or it may be merely an active fancy, which, because it is clear, I therefore believe to be true.

Now, there is that young, dark-haired, desolate-looking man, with a quantity of Palais Royal jewellery dangling from his chain, and the unmistakable look of a Frenchman in every inch of his person; I can see into his life and being as distinctly as if I were reading a page of long primer, well leaded. He is a pianoforte tuner—cannot you see that by his hands?—and he is the only son of a highly respectable cabinet-maker in a small provincial town in France. But cabinet-makers in small provincial towns are seldom men of means, even if highly respectable; and when they have ambitious sons, with talents refusing to develop themselves in the direction of ordinary mechanical labour, it is a difficulty to know what to do with them, that the stars and the pot-au-feu may be served at the same time. And so when young Auguste, who wanted only opportunity and encouragement to become a second Verdi at the least, finally decided on music as his vocation and England as his sphere (incited to this last decision by an insane belief that London was a sunless, fog-haunted Tom Tiddler's ground, where gold grew in the streets), Monsieur son Père and Madame sa Mère could only kiss him weeping, invoking all the saints in his behalf, and letting him depart as a lamb out of the sheepfold, with the wolves ranging in procession at the gate. "Cette maudite Angleterre!" they said, "and ces malheureuses jeunes miss!" They made no doubt but that their precious lamb would be devoured by the wolves in less than a month, and that he would return to his native place tacked for life to a jeune Miss Britannique, with teeth like a horse, a stride like a grenadier, hair like tow, and masculinity enough for half a dozen enfants perdus. This is the current idea of English women in France, and this is what Auguste's father and mother pictured to themselves when they drew out the programme of their son's career in England.

Auguste is thinking now of the past; of that long, wide, paved street where "Laplace, Menusier," shines like an oasis of pleasant memories in the dull desert of his daily life; he is thinking of la Mère Rougetête and her café, where he and the young men of the town used to assemble every evening at eight o'clock precisely, to play at dominoes and tric-trac, drinking eau sucré or café noir, as they chose; some—but these were terrible fellows—adding a little absinthe or rum as flavouring. He is thinking of fat old Babette, the femme de ménage, who is as much part of his home and its reminiscences as Maman herself, or Jacques the journeyman; he sees the lime-trees, with the bees humming about their flowers, and pretty little Fanchon, the daughter of "Madame Robert, Confiseur," gathering pâquerettes and bluets in the hedgeless meadows; he sees the old diligence coming

jingling in from Abbeville, and the cocked-hats of the garde champêtre scouring the country in search of evil-doers; he sees the good old curé, full of flesh and kindness, nodding here and there to his parishioners, every one of whom is like his own child; he sees mon père bald, vivacious, and obese, and ma mère in her pink ribbons, and black silk dress fitting like a skin; and then Auguste's heart gets very full, and his handkerchief is in sorrowful request, and he feels himself a lonely exile in this perfide Albion, where no gold grows in the street though the sun never shines, and where his dreams of fame and glory and money consequent, have consolidated themselves into the meagre fact of pianoforte tuning at two shillings—a reduction made to schools and professionals.

Poor Auguste! It is a little tragedy, though—is it not?—which he is enacting in his small way. He is paying for his English experience rather dearly; and yet it will be better for him in the end than if he had remained at that dear little dull provincial town all his life—a génie inconnu, giving itself the airs of an ugly duck, whose brilliant swanhood was ignored by the inferior fowls, envious of his supremacy. This was the story I told myself, looking at that dark-haired young Frenchman with the heavy eyelids and the melancholy face and fine-pointed finger-tops, very dirty, who sat by the door and looked out into the muddy street, and seemed not far from charcoal or prussic acid. And yet, perhaps, he was only tormented about his lodgings, and a landlady ignorant of the sublime laws of credit; perhaps his father, a well-to-do burly old curmudgeon, down in Leicester-square, making his fortune by all sorts of unhallowed ways, had boxed his ears this morning for some breach of filial respect—and these young Frenchmen will cry for a mere nothing sometimes; or perhaps he has a headache, and is loathing the idea of Cremorne.

Next to him come two bright, fair-haired English lads, with shillings apiece in their pockets, off to the Polytechnic and that jolly old ghost, for a rare lot of fun. Such a contrast as they present to melancholy, cream-coloured Auguste! Catch them crying about anything short of mamma's or the governor's death! They are evidently the sons of a gentleman, for all that they chaff the conductor and play monkey tricks with their money, and comport themselves generally like young leopard cubs turned into the likeness of two-footed Christians for the time being. Had they been in the country they would have been hunting rats with old Dick Lawson the ratecatcher, or snaring rabbits in the field below the spring-head, or digging for moles in the croft, or shooting young pheasants in the wood, or coaxing the filly in the paddock, when not "shooing" and frightening her into temporary insanity, or doing a thousand and one of those uncatalogued initiations into manhood which make boys so detestable, and yet which are somehow right steps toward a manly futurity. As it is, they expend their superfluous energy in London by chaffing

omnibus conductors, and "larking all over the place," as Jim says, trying to look stern (Jim is the conductor); but failing in the attempt. I can see all their lives, too, and their fathers' before them; the old man down in Sussex tying every shilling he possessed at the tails of his dogs and horses, and losing them all—the sons, inheriting their father's love of field sports and fresh country life; inheriting, too, his depth of chest and breadth of shoulder and thorough Saxon development and nature, but obliged, for the sake of their professions and the bread that must be baked, to come to smoky London—and now these two lads, with the old lay cropping out in their saucy faces and golden-edged curls and great broad frames, and all the other signs and symbols of the English gentleman with the fling of Esau across his raiment. One could scarcely conceive of anything healthier or more masculine than this type of the country-bred Briton: a type which it takes many generations of London smoke and slang to wear out.

Very different in texture altogether is the physical humanity of the small-handed woman opposite, dressed in a shabby gown, with a soiled flaunting bonnet, and a torn shawl of many colours, who evidently thinks that nerves and idleness are three parts of the essence of gentleness, and that she can make herself "a lady" by ceasing to be a woman and becoming a doll. Her husband is a rough-mannered, rough-handed mechanic, making perhaps forty shillings a week or so, more or less; and he, too, shares in the delusion that work is "low" for a woman, and that idleness is a refinement, and a thing to be cultivated by the ambitious. It is his pride to boast that "*his* wife is kept like a lady, with a servant of her own; and needn't do a hand's turn if she don't like." So he puts her in a "nice little home" at Camberwell, with a best parlour and a black horse-hair sofa, quite comfortable; and there she lords it in state over a miserable little elf, a parish apprentice, small enough to be carried like a lapdog in the pocket. But the elf does all the dirty work, and the rough and the hard work too, that my lady the mechanic's wife may not soil her hands, or make them "hard like a common woman's." She is one of a kind I see a great deal of, and that I can never sufficiently deplore; for they seem to me to be cutting at the root of all that is most wholesome in the English artisan class, its simple strong hold on realities; and that while the men of that class are so wonderfully improving, the women are just as much deteriorating by their terrible aping of fine-ladyism and finery.

Look at the envious glances which our lady of Camberwell is casting at those two pretty young creatures in bright blue silks, so carefully tucked up over their knees, evidently off to a friendly party somewhere. You can see that they are ladies, even if papa's income makes it necessary for them to peril their best dresses in an omnibus, rather than spend a few shillings in a cab. That they are happy and innocent, and innocently happy in their present finery, is also

as evident; and yet both those girls would do real good hard work if need be; and, indeed, do so; helping their one servant, Jane, as much from kindness and that she should not be overworked, as from mamma's desire, and their own, to "make things look nice." They are very charming girls; I should say the daughters of an artist, from a certain debonnaire something—a certain almost imperceptible loosening of stays and slackening of ropes that belongs to this class—and from the excellent choice of colours in their dress. I like to think of the sweetness of home, and the happy family life which they help to make in their fresh little house at Bayswater; I like to see them all crowding round dear papa's picture, each with more loving praises on her lips than the last; I like to see mamma, buxom, unwearied, managing mamma, with her faith that never fails and her hope that never cools, believing always in the fortune surely now within their grasp, and the sudden outblaze of fame that is to eclipse all living rivals. If the reality is something deader and drier than these brilliant dreams, what matter? the dreams are the sugar-plums helping to digest the "salt junk" of actuality, sweetening not supplanting meals.

As surely as these two gracious maidens are of the artist world, so surely is that lady next them of the literary. A square-headed woman, with a fixed, rather hard, but not unkindly face, wearing spectacles, short petticoats, scant crinoline, if any, carrying an umbrella and a roll of papers—is she not a British Museumite, and one familiar with the printer's devil?—a practical, strong-minded, clear-brained authoress, ready for any work and with energy enough for any vocation, and with half a hundred missions; of which, however, womanly subserviency or submission does not form one. As she sits there, with her strongly-marked features and her watchful eyes that see everything, yet are not of the quick and roving kind, rather wide and steady, I can read her history too, like the rest; perhaps more clearly than she can read mine, though I meet her big grey eyes fixed on me, and know that I am being photographed for future use. One thing I see, which has no business there, and that is, a wedding-ring on her left hand. Her husband, poor man! has a hardish time of it, be sure; for those deep dints in the forehead between the eyes, and the furrow from the nostril to the mouth, and the look of pain and experience and the unrest of a battle always going on and never ended, are not eloquent of rose-leaves and eider-down; and I fear that my literary friend's matrimonial possessor may at times find a strong-minded woman, making her due share of the family income, rather more of a helpmate than a sweetheart. And yet she is not bad, she is only too much the reverse of our lady of Camberwell. When women will leave off exaggerating good qualities they will have achieved a more thorough freedom than even the most emancipated dream of: and that is, freedom from the tyranny of their own weaknesses.

Who is that man facing our poor Auguste, next the door, talking to the conductor? He is one of the nameless mysterious people that are always turning up in London, dirty and shabby, unutterably dissipated, but with a handful of gold and silver, and seemingly on good terms with every one on the road and about the public-house doors. He talks to Jim as if he were his brother, and makes private and confidential inquiries about 'Arry, and 'Arry's wife and children (he calls her the missis, and them the kids); and he knows all about the last fight, and enters into deep arcana of letters that should have been written, and of foul play that has been the ruin of this and that; and I confess that he puzzles me, and unless he is a fighting-man, or the keeper of a house of call for fighting-men, or a translated driver who has made his fortune, or else the conductor who wore a diamond ring worth seventy pounds, and had a lady for a wife with a diamond ring worth forty more, I cannot tell who he is; I think, though, he keeps a house of call somewhere in the Haymarket, and that he rears bull pups for pleasure, and has a "fancy" barman for sport.

The grave, severe, elderly gentleman, evidently a wealthy merchant of impeccable respectability, sitting next him, looks very much as if he were eating a ghostly lemon, which sets his mouth awry. It is a condescension on the part of our wealthy merchant to ride in an omnibus at all, but when he gets bracketed with a fellow-traveller of the present calibre, his gorge rises almost beyond his power to keep down; and his wife and daughter wonder what has made papa so cross to-day when he goes home to dinner, and visions of an impending bankruptcy sweep before mamma, naturally a little timid and very lachrymose. If those fluttered inmates of Westbourne-terrace knew that dear papa had been submitted to such contamination, how they would have sympathised with him! As it is, for want of knowing, Mary Matilda sulked, and Emma Jane flouted, and poor dear mamma cried, and John was in the dust with sackcloth round his calves and ashes on his powder, because papa was in such an awful humour, there was no bearing with him. Was it really only the accidental presence of a fighting-man in an omnibus that made all this to-do?—or had yesterday's unlucky speculation and to-day's opening of the purse-strings some hand in the upset? I think old Mr. Doublecash, the banker, could have dissected some part of the load, though it might have been the last straw that broke the camel's back, which had not bent under the weight of iron.

Little care the couple next to the respectable British merchant for anything in the world save themselves. Both young, both silly, awfully in love, and newly married, if life is not fairyland to them now, I wonder when it will be, and to whom! They have not a care; not the faintest shadow of future anxiety lies across their footway; there is no sickness in the world, no debt, no poverty, no unkindness, no disappointment, nothing but a huge wedding-cake, all sugar and

sweet almonds, decked with wedding favours snow white, the edges unsoiled and the ends unjagged. They were married just this day week; and I can see the pretty, simple, country wedding down among the mountains, where, I am bound to say, if I would speak the truth, a wedding of almost any kind is held as a maiden triumph worthy any amount of peans; for young men of marriageable means are frightfully scarce, and young ladies of marriageable age just as much too rare in these remoter parts of England. So that, when Cecilia Selina was duly engaged and finally wedded to Harry Augustus, it was something to be rejoiced at even beyond the rejoicing of love. It was a prize drawn in the lottery where so many must turn up blanks. They have known each other all their lives, these young people, but it was only quite of late that they thought of being in love at all; or at least that he thought of it; perhaps Cecilia Selina and her sisters might have told a different story. To him, however, it flashed out at once, and quite unexpectedly, when he saw the attention which Mr. Wiseman, the Cambridge tutor down for the season, paid Miss Cecilia at the vicar's evening-party—she in no wise resenting or discountenancing. Then Mr. Harry Augustus hid the truth from himself no longer; he confessed his love; he bought the blue turquoise forget-me-not ring, *de rigueur* in his estimation; he spoke to mamma, and he asked papa; and, finally, in three months' time from the day he "offered," was made the happy husband of Cecilia Selina—coming up to London for their honeymoon, as gay as larks and as bright as peacocks. They have seen everything, from the Tower to the Crystal Palace; doing all the theatres, and all the exhibitions, and all the sights, with unflagging spirits and untiring muscles. They write long letters every day to their sisters, and shed a reflexion of their own sunshine on the quiet home by the lake-side; and, then, they will go back the day month of their marriage, neither sooner nor later, and the vicar will give them a dinner, at which their healths will be drank, Harry Augustus being bound to make a speech in reply; which he does, very fairly on the whole, breaking down into a headless sentence, with nothing to stand on, only at the last.

I wonder who is that fine-looking man, who has just come in, taking up more than the room vacated by the two fair English boys. He is a big, many-fleshed person, a man seeming to belong to a larger generation than the present; standing six foot full, in his shoes, and broad in the proportion of his height and sixty years. His hair, which is long and thick and wavy, is snow white, as is his beard; but his eyes are dark and lustrous, and his eyebrows black as jet. He is wonderfully handsome, and of the leonine type of manhood; a dangerous man in his wrath I should say, but to be led by a child in the silken cords of gentleness and love. He may be anything, civil or military: no, he cannot be military! He has never gone through the goose-step, or been drilled in a barrack-yard

in his life. Those broad, wide flings of his—his coat of monstrous looseness, and his trousers of unheard-of width, his habitual lounge and strong individuality not in the faintest degree shaded off into command, are all against the possibility of the military theory. He looks more like an engineer—like a man who has been abroad in rich, warm, generous climates, and who has fought for his own hand ever since he was a boy—conquering all manner of evil circumstance, and coming now to the end of the strife triumphant and a hero to the last. I like to see these leonine magnificent men. They are like bits of old Greek or Roman life, great, beautiful, and masculine, translated into our smaller world of nerves and nervous development; and carry with them an atmosphere of health and strength, even into omnibuses when they enter. I could weave a whole novel out of that big man's life; but before I have finished the first chapter, he lunges at the conductor with his thick carved stick, heaves himself weightily out of the machine, and I see him striding back at a speed I could not match, having forgotten to buy his wife a lobster at Lynn's. And Lynn's is the only place in London—so he says, but I do not—where they are to be had worth the eating. And when there falls helplessly into his place an old, bent, withered, dusty, little woman, with a red bundle smelling of cheese and stale pie-crust—a dusty little woman like a withered green apple all of whose juices are dried up, and whose few last years will be spent in the charitable Union—I too have come to the end of my day's travel, and must leave my omnibus friends of an hour with the remainder of their histories unfinished.

MORE TRIFLES FROM CEYLON.

In this moist showery isle of verdure, if it happen not to rain for six weeks, people begin to write and declaim about the fearful drought. One man from the Ambegamoa district describes the terrible state of things there; it has actually not rained for three whole weeks! Now, in the north of Ceylon, the climate of which resembles in some degree that of India, and on the Coromandel coast, rain falls at one season of the year, that is, between October and January, and for the rest of the year very little indeed falls—certainly when it does come down, it makes up for lost time.

Just at present we have a season of drought, and the wild animals consequently draw towards the rivers; and cheetahs, or panthers rather—for, according to Sir E. Tennent, the cheetah is unknown in Ceylon—have approached the outskirts of Colombo, the capital of the island. A very large one was observed swimming across the Kalany Ganga a few days ago, and was shot.

Later still, while a strongly built Singhalese man was bathing in the same river, a panther sprang into the water and seized him by the right arm; the man, who was unarmed, grasped his assailant by the throat; and a companion

ran up with a knife, and dealt the panther such a blow on the head that he quitted his hold of the man's arm, but again seized him by the thigh. The man who had the knife, cut the panther across the throat and rescued his companion: an act of daring for which he ought to receive a medal. The wounded man was conveyed to the hospital, where he lies dangerously ill.

A friend of mine was lately riding in company with three others, in single file along the narrow strip of land which connects the peninsula of Jaffna with the rest of the island, when suddenly his horse sprang to one side in a manner so unexpected as nearly to unseat him. It appeared that an alligator which had been lying by the side of the lagoon, had made a spring at the horse's legs as he passed. One of the gentlemen who was riding behind my friend, and who had seen the whole proceeding, was so strongly impressed with the idea that the horse had been touched by the alligator, that he was not satisfied until he had dismounted and examined the horse's legs. This is unquestionably one of the coolest pieces of impertinence I have ever heard of on the part of a tank alligator; and having heard of it I shall certainly be more cautious about going into tanks where alligators are, up to my waist, for half an hour at a time. I remember once watching the proceedings of alligators in a tank in this neighbourhood. I espied on the opposite side of a tank two black curlew, birds of most delicate flavour, but very shy. My gun carrier was a good way in the rear, and as the curlew were moving quietly along, I rode into the tank to watch them. There were several alligators about me, and the way they went to work was this: A fellow would rise to the surface and look at my pony and me to see where we were. Then he would sink and come up again a little nearer and go down again, and come up and have another look to see where we were. At last my gun was brought and I had my shot at the curlew, and saw no more of the alligators, who always take alarm at the sound of a gun.

I omitted to mention that on his return a day or two after, my friend kept a look-out for his enemy, and discovered him once more on the bank—he gave him a two-ounce rifle-ball, which made a long white scar along his back; however, a wound like that does not usually prove fatal at once, and the alligator succeeded in getting away.

The magistrate at Mullativoe one morning found that an alligator had sought the hospitable shelter of his court-house during the night, and a gentleman at Batticaton found another in his stable.

An old sportsman in Jaffna, who had an endless stock of tales, used to tell how he had once shot several alligators with grains of rice instead of ball! After he had tested the credulity of his hearers to a moderate degree, he would add that the alligators were about nine inches long. They were young ones which he killed as specimens.

However loathsome-looking an animal an old alligator may be, the young alligators are not so very disgusting. In fact, the bright yellow bars which alternate with the black ones, are rather pretty than otherwise. I had one in a vivarium, and the vicious little beast used to nip my fingers when I tried to feed it. It got out one night, and I don't know what became of it.

A moorman caught a young alligator in his fishing kraal in the Matura River, and I went to see it. It was alive, and to all appearances there was no reason why, if left alone, it should not grow up to alligator's estate—its length was about three and a half feet. Thinking that this would be a good opportunity for testing the correctness of what I had heard in the north of the island about the remarkable effect of lime upon the alligator, I asked a man to bring me some, on which he procured from a neighbouring house a lump of the chunamb, or lime prepared from shells, which the natives are in the habit of chewing along with the nut of the areca-palm, and the leaves of the betel-creeper. The lime had previously been moistened with water. Having opened the jaws of our unfortunate victim: an operation to which it submitted with exemplary resignation (when it found it could not prevent it), we inserted, as far back as the opening into the throat, a lump of chunamb about as large as a pigeon's egg, after which we put the animal into the water. Immediately it turned over on its side and then on its back, and appeared paralysed; soon its eyes closed, and I thought it was dead. After about five minutes it revived a little. I could not remain longer to watch it, but in the evening I rode to where it had been experimented on, when I found that it was dead, and learnt that it had died within two hours of my leaving. On examining its mouth, I found that the lime had not been swallowed, but was still in the throat, just where it had been placed. I do not remember to have read in any work on animals, of this antipathy of the alligator to lime; and it still remains to be explained how it is that a substance of that nature, specially prepared for the use of man, and by him daily chewed, should have so powerful and instantaneous an effect upon an animal otherwise so tenacious of life, when merely placed in the mouth, without being swallowed. The experiment may appear to have been a cruel one, and yet, perhaps, it was the speediest and easiest mode of killing the alligator. I may now venture to state that the Tamuls have an idea that if a bullet be filled with lime before firing at an alligator, it will, wherever it penetrates, cause a wound that will prove mortal. I have, since making the experiment related above, been told that it is not uncommon for the Singhalese to fill the stomach of a bullock with lime, and to place it near an alligator's haunts; knowing that if he swallow the lime, death will ensue.

Mullativoe (mentioned just now) is an isolated station, where the magistrate is the only European, and administers justice in a patriarchal way. Close to the court is a tank full of

alligators, and as the magistrate sat on his bench he could see them crawl out and bask in the sunshine. So he used to take his rifle with him to court, and keep it ready loaded beside him. In the middle of the examination of a witness, the clerk of the court would turn round and say, "Sir! sir! there's an alligator." Down would go the pen, up would go the rifle—Bang! and out would rush the clerk and interpreter to see what damage had been done. After a few minutes they would come in again to report, and then business would proceed as before.

A week or two ago, a Tamul man and woman were travelling together at night, when they met an elephant in the road. They tried to avoid it, but in vain. The animal charged them both, killed the woman, and very severely injured the man. Most probably it was a rogue.

Buffaloes are very formidable customers. They charge with great fury, and it is not easy to get a good shot when they are coming at one with their hard heads, from which a ball is apt to glance. The best way to shoot a buffalo when there are two sportsmen, is for the two to keep a hundred yards apart. One should then fire. If the buffalo does not drop, he will probably charge the man who fired, and in so doing will give the other sportsman the chance of a flank shot.

The natives catch the wild buffaloes, and tame them. At certain seasons they are employed in ploughing the paddy-fields; at other times they are allowed to roam about, when they often regather with the wild herds. A half-tamed buffalo, though he yields a sullen obedience to his master, will often prove a dangerous customer to a stranger: in fact, almost more so than a wild one. I was travelling one day with a lady, on the sea road between Trincomalie and Jaffna. I was riding a small pony, when, in crossing a plain, a buffalo charged me. I was unarmed, and as he came at me with a will, I had no alternative but to dash on as fast as I could, my assailant charging from one side; but with a tired pony escape was not easy, and I was getting the worst of it, when, to my great satisfaction and amusement, my friend went head over heels in a mud-hole which lay between us. This cooled his ardour, and he gave up the pursuit.

There is a place called Kokalai, in the northern province, where wild buffaloes were almost always to be seen. One of them was exceedingly fierce, and killed several persons. The magistrate went to the spot, and in the capacity of coroner held an inquest. He had just concluded, when the buffalo emerged from the neighbouring forest, and charged down upon his party. Fortunately he had with him a single-barrelled rifle. He dropped on one knee, waited till the buffalo was close on him, and fired. The ball took effect in the buffalo's forehead, and ran far into his body, and the brute dropped dead at the gentleman's feet.

Bears often attack people, and are seemingly the aggressors; but in all probability it is rather

the fear of being attacked themselves that induces them to injure man. I have a friend who had a most terrific tussle with a bear which he had wounded with shot. The bear closed with him, and he fought the bear with his knife, giving and receiving terrible wounds. At length my friend got away, and crawled for some distance till he obtained assistance. But he will bear to his grave, the marks of his enemy's teeth and claws. The following story was recently told me by the gentleman who met with the adventure: He had a pony which was very much attached to him, and very gentle with him, but which would not allow any one else to mount him. He was given to flying at and biting strangers, a quality which turned to the advantage of his owner. One morning my friend was on the march through the jungle, his coolies and servants following with his baggage, guns, &c., and he walking with his pony's bridle over his arm. It would appear that a bear was just then regaling himself in the pathway, by an ant-hill which concealed his interesting figure from the traveller's view until close upon him. Suddenly the gentleman felt himself thrown down, with the bear on his back pawing and scratching him. Knowing that there were four loaded guns in the hands of his attendants, he called out to them to fire, and at the same time struck backward at the bear with a stick which lay within his reach. No one fired, however, and he did not know what to do, when suddenly he heard a scrimmage; next moment the weight was removed from his shoulders, and on looking up he saw the bear in full flight and the pony after him with his ears set back. He got up and shook himself, and saw his guns lying on the ground; his attendants had all disappeared. He was about to retrace his footsteps, when he heard several voices saying "Here we are!" and on looking up, he saw his people perched high in the trees. They told him that the pony had flown at the bear with such fury, that he had taken to his heels in the manner described. Moral. There is some good in a biting and kicking pony.

There is a certain gentleman in Ceylon who is a great sportsman. I do not know him myself, and therefore do not make more particular allusion to him; but he had the following adventure, and it was related to me by a mutual friend, who authorised me to repeat it. This gentleman was one day crossing some water on foot, to get a shot at an elephant; his gun was in the hands of a man who was going round the shore. As he walked along, something lay in his way which he imagined to be a log of wood, so he stepped over it. No sooner had he placed one leg over it than the log appeared suddenly to become imbued with life, and he found himself across the back of an alligator;—probably more alarmed even than himself at being thus mounted. The alligator immediately rushed off. The rider, as soon as he recovered his presence of mind, took a header into the water, and escaped.

I alluded in a former paper to an alligator which had killed two persons not far from where

I write, and who was constantly on the watch for bathers. I am happy to say he has been shot. The particulars of the manner in which he killed the two men have been communicated to me. A gentleman in the public service was bathing within an enclosure. A Singhalese gentleman of rank was also bathing without the enclosure; a native attendant filled a vessel with water and handed it to him; suddenly the man who had brought the water was gone; and the two bathers saw him with half his body in the water, at some distance, throwing up his arms and apparently articulating something. All at once he sunk. They imagined at first that he had been carried off by the current, but subsequently the body was found in a mutilated state. A few days afterwards, seven pilgrims were standing knee-deep in the same river; the alligator passed six of them, seized the last, and dragged him away from among his companions.

At Batticaloa a girl was bathing on her bridal morning, when an alligator seized and carried her off. A friend of mine succeeded in shooting the brute, and found within him parts of the girl, and her bangles, or arm-rings.

Sharks are occasionally caught with the remains of human beings within them. Not long since, one was exposed for sale in the bazaar at Colombo, in which was found a white hand; a poor soldier had been buried at sea the previous day, and it is believed it had belonged to him. I remember rather a pretty little discussion arising between two Singhalese men, the one the buyer, the other the seller, of a shark. The price paid for it was twenty rix dollars, or one pound ten. When the purchaser was cutting it up for sale, he found inside the stomach, the leg of a man. Thereupon people declined purchasing any pieces, and the shark remained on the man's hands. So he demanded that the seller should refund the one pound ten. "No, no," said he; "had you found in the fish a bag full of money, you would have claimed it as yours and given me none." The bystanders gave a verdict against the purchaser, and he had to make the best of his bargain.

A RENT IN A CLOUD.

IN TWENTY-FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XVIII. TIDINGS FROM BENGAL.

I AM not about to chronicle how time now rolled over the characters of our story. As for the life of those at the villa, nothing could be less eventful. All existences that have any claim to be called happy are of this type, and if there be nothing brilliant or triumphant in their joys, neither is there much poignancy in their sorrows.

Lloyd wrote almost by every mail, and with a tameness that shadowed forth the uniform tenor of his own life. It was pretty nigh the same story, garnished by the same reflections. He had been named a district judge "up country," and passed his days deciding the disputed claims of indigo planters against the ryots, and the ryots against the planters. Craft,

subtlety, and a dash of perjury, ran through all these suits, and rendered them rather puzzles for a quick intelligence to resolve, than questions of right or legality. He told, too, how dreary and uncompanionable his life was; how unsolaced by friendship, or even companionship; that the climate was enervating, the scenery monotonous, and the thermometer at a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty degrees.

Yet Loyd could speak with some encouragement about his prospects. He was receiving eight hundred rupees a month, and hoped to be promoted to some place, ending in Ghar or Bad, with an advance of two hundred more. He darkly hinted that the mutinous spirit of certain regiments was said to be extending, but he wrote this with all the reserve of an official, and the fear that Aunt Grainger might misquote him. Of course there were other features in these letters—those hopes and fears, and prayers and wishes, which lovers like to write, almost as well as read, poetising to themselves their own existence, and throwing a rose-tint of romance over lives as lead-coloured as may be. Of these I am not going to say anything. It is a theme both too delicate and too dull to touch on. I respect and I read it.

I have less reserve with the correspondence of another character of our tale, though certainly, when written, it was not meant for publicity. The letter of which I am about to make an extract, and it can be but an extract, was written about ten months after the departure of Calvert for India, and, like his former ones, addressed to his friend Drayton:

"At the hazard of repeating myself, if by chance my former letters have reached you, I state that I am in the service and pay of the Meer Morad, of Ghurtapore, of whose doings the Times correspondent will have told you something. I have eight squadrons of cavalry and a half battery of field-pieces—brass ten pounders—with an English crown on their breech. We are well armed, admirably mounted, and perfect devils to fight. You saw what we did with the detachment of the —th, and their sick convoy, coming out of Allehbad. The only fellow that escaped was the doctor, and I saved his life to attach him to my own staff. He is an Irish fellow, named Tobin, and comes from Tralee—if there be such a place—and begs his friends there not to say masses for him, for he is alive, and drunk every evening. Do this, if not a bore.

"By good luck the Meer, my chief, quarrelled with the king's party in Delhi, and we came away in time to save being caught by Wilson, who would have recognised me at once. By the way, Baxter of the 30th was stupid enough to say, 'Eh, Calvert, what the devil are you doing amongst these niggers?' He was a prisoner at the time, and, of course, I had to order him to be shot for his imprudence. How he knew me I cannot guess; my beard is down to my breast, and I am turbaned and shawled in most approved fashion. We are now simply marauding, cutting off supplies, falling on weak detachments, and doing a small retail business in murder wherever

we chance upon a station of civil servants. I narrowly escaped being caught by a troop of the 9th Lancers, every man of whom knows me. I went over, with six trusty fellows, to Astraghan, where I learned that a certain Loyd was stationed as government receiver. We got there by night, burned his bungalow, shot him, and then discovered he was not our man, but another Loyd. Bradshaw came up with his troop. He gave us an eight miles chase cross country, and, knowing how the Ninth ride, I took them over some sharp nullahs, and the coppers they got you'll scarcely see mentioned in the government despatches. I fired three barrels of my Yankee six-shooter at Brad, and I heard the old beggar offer a thousand rupees for my head. When he found he could not overtake us, and sounded a halt, I screamed out, 'Threes about, Bradshaw.' I'd give fifty pounds to hear him tell the story at mess: 'Yes, sir, begad, sir, in as good English, sir, as yours or mine, sir: a fellow who had served the Queen, I'll swear.'

"For the moment, it is a mere mutiny, but it will soon be a rebellion, and I don't conceal from myself the danger of what I am doing, as you, in all likelihood, will suspect. Not dangers from the Queen's fellows—for they shall never take me alive—but the dangers I run from my present associates, and who, of course, only half trust me. . . . Do you remember old Commissary-General Yates—J.C.V.R. Yates, the old ass used to write himself? Well, amongst the other events of the time, was the sack and 'loot' of his house at Cawnpore, and the capture of his pretty wife, whom they brought in here a prisoner. I expected to find the poor young creature terrified almost out of her reason. Not a bit of it! She was very angry with the fellows who robbed her, and rated them roundly in choice Hindostanee, telling one of the chiefs that his grandfather was a scorched pig. Like a woman, and a clever woman, too, though she recognised me—I can almost swear that she did—she never showed it, and we talked away all the evening, and smoked our hookahs together in Oriental guise. I gave her a pass next morning to Calcutta, and saw her safe to the great trunk road, giving her bearers as far as Behdarah. She expressed herself as very grateful for my attentions, and hoped at some future time—this with a malicious twinkle of her grey eyes—to show the 'Bahadoor' that she had not forgotten them. So you see there are lights as well as shadows in the life of a rebel."

I omit a portion here, and come to the conclusion, which was evidently added in haste.

"'Up, and away!' is the order. We are off to Bithoor. The Nana there—a staunch friend, as it was thought, of British rule—has declared for independence, and as there is plenty of go in him, look out for something 'sensational.' You wouldn't believe how, amidst all these stirring scenes, I long for news—from what people call home—of Rocksley, and Uncle G., and the dear Soph; but more from that villa beside the Italian lake. I'd give a canvas

bag that I carry at my girdle with a goodly stock of pearls, sapphires, and rubies, for one evening's diary of that cottage!

"If all go on as well and prosperously as I hope for, I have not the least objection, but rather a wish, that you would tell the world where I am, and what I am doing. Linked with failure, I'd rather keep dark; but as a sharer in a great success, I burn to make it known through the length and breadth of the land that I am alive and well, and ready to acquit a number of personal obligations, if not to the very fellows who injured me, to their friends, relatives, and cousins, to the third generation. Tell them, Algy, 'A chiel's amang ye, cutting throats,' and add, if you like, that he writes himself your attached friend,

"HARRY CALVERT."

This letter, delivered in some mysterious manner to the bankers at Calcutta, was duly forwarded, and in time reached the hands of Alfred Drayton, who confided its contents to a few "friends" of Calvert's—men who felt neither astonished nor shocked at the intelligence—shifty fellows, with costly tastes, who would live on society somehow, reputably, if they could—dishonourably, if they must; and who all agreed that "Old Calvert," as they called him—he was younger than most of them—had struck out a very clever line, and a far more remunerative one than "rooking young Griffins at billiards"—such being, in their estimation, the one other alternative which fate had to offer him. This was all the publicity, however, Drayton gave to his friend's achievements. Somehow or other, paragraphs did appear, not naming Calvert, but intimating that an officer, who had formerly served her Majesty, had been seen in the ranks of the insurgents of Upper Bengal. Yet Calvert was not suspected, and he dropped out of people's minds as thoroughly as if he had dropped out of life.

To this oblivion, for a while, we must leave him; for even if we had in our hands, which we have not, any records of his campaigning life, we might scruple to occupy our readers with details which have no direct bearing upon our story. That Loyd never heard of him is clear enough. The name of Calvert never occurred in any letter from his hand. It was one no more to be spoken of by Florence or himself. One letter from him, however, mentioned an incident which, to a suspicious mind, might have opened a strange vein of speculation, though it is right to add that neither the writer nor the reader ever hit upon a clue to the mystery indicated. It was during his second year of absence that he was sent to Mulnath, from which he writes:

"The mutiny has not touched this spot; but we hear every day the low rumbling of the distant storm, and we are told that our servants, and the native battalion that are our garrison, are only waiting for the signal to rise. I doubt this greatly. I have nothing to excite my distrust of the people, but much to recommend them to my favour. It is only two days back that I

received secret intelligence of an intended attack upon my bungalow by a party of Bithoor cavalry, whose doings have struck terror far and near. Two companies of the —th, that I sent for, arrived this morning, and I now feel very easy about the reception the enemy will meet. The strangest part of all is, however, to come. Captain Rolt, who commands the detachment, said in a laughing, jocular way, 'I declare, judge, if I were you, I would change my name, at least till this row was over.' I asked him 'Why?' in some surprise; and he replied, 'There's rather a run against judges of your name lately. They shot one at Astraghan last November. Six weeks back, they came down near Agra, where Craven Loyd had just arrived, district judge and assessor; they burnt his bungalow, and massacred himself and his household; and now, it seems, they are after *you*. I take it that some one of your name has been rather sharp on these fellows, and that this is the pursuit of a long meditated vengeance. At all events, I'd call myself Smith or Brown till this prejudice blows over.'"

The letter soon turned to a pleasanter theme—his application for a leave had been favourably entertained. By October—it was then July—he might hope to take his passage for England. Not that he was, he said, at all sick of India. He had now adapted himself to its ways and habits, his health was good, and the solitude—the one sole cause of complaint—he trusted would, ere long, give way to the happiest and most blissful of all companionship. "Indeed, I must try to make you all emigrate with me. Aunt Grainger can have her flowers and her vegetables here in all seasons, one of my retainers is an excellent gardener, and Milly's passion for riding can be indulged upon the prettiest Arab horses I ever saw."

Though the dangers which this letter spoke of as impending were enough to make Florence anxious and eager for the next mail from India, his letter never again alluded to them. He wrote full of the delight of having got his leave, and overjoyed at all the happiness that he pictured as before him.

So in the same strain and spirit was the next, and then came September, and he wrote: "This day month, dearest—this day month, I am to sail. Already, when these lines are before you, the interval, which to me now seems an age, will have gone over, and you can think of me as hastening towards you."

"Oh, aunt dearest, listen to this. Is not this happy news?" cried Florence, as she pressed the loved letter to her lips. "Joseph says that on the 18th—to-day is—what day is to-day? But you are not minding me, aunt. What can there be in that letter of yours so interesting as this?"

This remonstrance was not very unreasonable, seeing that Miss Grainger was standing with her eyes fixed steadfastly at a letter, whose few lines could not have taken a moment to read, and which must have had some other claim thus to arrest her attention.

"This is wonderful!" cried she, at last.

"What is wonderful, aunt? Do pray gratify our curiosity!"

But the old lady hurried away without a word, and the door of her room, as it sharply banged, showed that she desired to be alone.

CHAPTER XIX. A SHOCK.

No sooner did Miss Grainger find herself safely locked in her room, than she re-opened the letter the post had just brought her. It was exceedingly brief, and seemed hastily written:

"Strictly and imperatively private.

"Trieste, Tuesday morning.

"My dear Miss Grainger,—I have just arrived here from India, with important despatches for the government. The fatigues of a long journey have re-opened an old wound, and laid me up for a day; but as my papers are of such a nature as will require my presence to explain, there is no use in my forwarding them by another; I wait therefore, and write this hurried note, to say that I will make you a flying visit on Saturday next. I say *you*, because I wish to see yourself and alone. Manage this in the best way you can. I hope to arrive by the morning train, and be at the villa by eleven or twelve at latest. Whether you receive me or not, say nothing of this note to your nieces; but I trust and pray you will not refuse half an hour to your attached and faithful friend,

"HARRY CALVERT."

It was a name to bring up many memories, and Miss Grainger sat gazing at the lines before her in a state of wonderment blended with terror. Once only had she read of him since his departure; it was, when agitated and distressed to know what had become of him, she ventured on a step of, for her, daring boldness, and to whose temerity she would not make her nieces the witnesses. She wrote a letter to Miss Sophia Calvert, begging to have some tidings of her cousin, and some clue to his whereabouts. The answer came by return of post; it ran thus:

"Miss Calvert has to acknowledge the receipt of Miss Grainger's note of the 8th inst.

"Miss Calvert is not aware of any claim Miss Grainger can prefer to address her by letter, still less, of any right to bring under her notice the name of the person she has dared to inquire after. Any further correspondence from Miss Grainger will be sent back unopened."

The reading of this epistle made the old lady keep her bed for three days, her sufferings being all the more aggravated, since they imposed secrecy. From that day forth she had never heard Calvert's name; and though for hours long she would think and ponder over him, the mention of him was so strictly interdicted, that the very faintest allusion to him was even avoided.

And now, like one risen from the grave, he was come back again! Come back to renew, Heaven could tell, what sorrows of the past, and

refresh the memory of days that had always been dashed with troubles.

It was already Friday. Where and how could a message reach him? She dreaded him, it is true: but why she dreaded him she knew not. It was a sort of vague terror, such as some persons feel at the sound of the sea, or the deep-voiced moaning of the wind through trees. It conveyed a sense of peril through a sense of sadness—no more. She had grown to dislike him from the impertinent rebuke Miss Calvert had administered to her on his account. The mention of Calvert was coupled with a darkened room, leeches, and ice on the head, and, worse than all, a torturing dread that her mind might wander, and the whole secret history of the correspondence leak out in her ramblings.

Were not these reasons enough to make her tremble at the return of the man who had occasioned so much misery? Yet, if she could even find a pretext, could she be sure that she could summon courage to say, "I'll not see you"? There are men to whom a cruelly cold reply is a repulse; but Calvert was not one of these, and this she knew well. Besides, were she to decline to receive him, might it not drive him to come and ask to see the girls, who now, by acceding to his request, need never hear or know of his visit?

After long and mature deliberation, she determined on her line of action. She would pretend to the girls that her letter was from her lawyer, who, accidentally finding himself in her neighbourhood, begged an interview as he passed through Orta on his way to Milan, and for this purpose she could go over in the boat alone, and meet Calvert on his arrival. In this way she could see him without the risk of her nieces' knowledge, and avoid the unpleasantness of not asking him to remain when he had once passed her threshold.

"I can at least show him," she thought, "that our old relations are not to be revived, though I do not altogether break off all acquaintanceship. No man has a finer sense of tact, and he will understand the distinction I intend, and respect it." She also bethought her it smacked somewhat of a vengeance—though she knew not precisely how or why—that she'd take Sophia Calvert's note along with her, and show him how her inquiry for him was treated by his family. She had a copy of her own, a most polite and respectful epistle it was, and in no way calculated to evoke the rebuke it met with. "He'll be perhaps able to explain the mystery," thought she, "and whatever Miss Calvert's misconception, he can eradicate it when he sees her."

"How fussy and important aunt is this morning!" said Florence, as the old lady stepped into the boat. "If the interview were to be with the Lord Chancellor instead of a London solicitor, she could not look more profoundly impressed with its solemnity."

"She'll be dreadful when she comes back," said Emily, laughing; "so full of all the law jargon that she couldn't understand, but will

feel a right to repeat, because she has paid for it."

It was thus they criticised her. Just as many aunts and uncles, and some papas and mammas, too, are occasionally criticised by those younger members of the family who are prone to be very caustic as to the mode certain burdens are borne, the weight of which has never distressed their own shoulders. And this, not from any deficiency of affection, but simply through a habit which, in the levity of our day, has become popular, and taught us to think little of the ties of parentage, and call a father a Governor.

CHAPTER XX. AGAIN AT ORTA.

"THERE is a stranger arrived, Signora, who has been asking for you," said the landlord of the little inn at Orta, as Miss Grainger reached the door. "He has ordered a boat, but, feeling poorly, has lain down on a bed till it is ready. This is his servant," and he pointed, as he spoke, to a dark-visaged and very handsome man, who wore a turban of white and gold, and who made a deep gesture of obeisance as she turned towards him. Ere she had time to question him as to his knowledge of English, a bell rung sharply, and the man hurried away to return very speedily, and, at the same instant, a door opened and Calvert came towards her, and, with an air of deep emotion, took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"This is too kind, far too kind and considerate of you," said he, as he led her forward to a room.

"When I got your note," she began, in a voice a good deal shaken, for there was much in the aspect of the man before her to move her, "I really did not know what to do. If you desired to see me alone, it would be impossible to do this at the villa, and so I bethought me that the best way was to come over here at once."

"Do you find me much changed?" he asked, in a low, sad voice.

"Yes, I think you are a good deal changed. You are browner, and you look larger, even taller, than you did, and perhaps the beard makes you seem older."

This was all true, but not the whole truth, which, had she spoken it, would have said, that he was far handsomer than before. The features had gained an expression of dignity and elevation from habits of command, and there was a lofty pride in his look which became him well, the more as it was now tempered with a gentle courtesy of manner which showed itself in every word and every gesture towards her. A slight, scarcely perceptible baldness, at the very top of the forehead, served to give height to his head, and add to the thoughtful character of his look. His dress, too, was peculiar, and probably set off to advantage his striking features and handsome figure. He wore a richly embroidered pelisse, fastened by a shawl at the waist, and on his head, rather jauntily set, a scarlet fez stitched in gold, and ornamented with a star of diamonds and emeralds.

"You are right," said he, with a winning but very melancholy smile. "These last two years

have aged me greatly. I have gone through a great deal in them. Come," added he, as he seated himself at her side, and took her hand in his, "come, tell me what have you heard of me? Be frank, tell me everything."

"Nothing—absolutely nothing," said she.

"Do you mean that no one mentioned me?"

"We saw no one. Our life has been one of complete unbroken solitude."

"Well, but your letters; people surely wrote about me?"

"No," said she, in some awkwardness, for she felt as though there was something offensive in this oblivion, and was eager to lay it to the charge of their isolation. "Remember what I have told you about our mode of life."

"You read the newspapers, though! You might have come upon my name in them!"

"We read none. We ceased to take them. We gave ourselves up to the little cares and occupations of our home, and we really grew to forget that there was a world outside us."

Had she been a shrewd reader of expression, she could not fail to have noticed the intense relief her words gave him. He looked like one who hears the blessed words Not Guilty! after hours of dread anxiety for his fate. "And am I to believe," asked he, in a voice tremulous with joy, "that from the hour I said farewell, to this day, that I have been to you as one dead and buried and forgotten?"

"I don't think we forgot you; but we rigidly observed our pledge to you, and never spoke of you."

"What is there on earth so precious as the trustfulness of true friendship?" burst he in, with a marked enthusiasm. "I have had what the world calls great successes, and I swear to you I'd give them all, and all their rewards twice told, for this proof of affection; and the dear girls, and Florence—how is she?"

"Far better than when you saw her. Indeed, I should say perfectly restored to health. She walks long walks, and takes rides on a mountain pony, and looks like one who had never known illness."

"Not married yet?" said he, with a faint smile.

"No; he is coming back next month, and they will probably be married before Christmas."

"And as much in love as ever—he, I mean?"

"Fully; and she too."

"Pshaw! She never cared for him; she never could care for him. She tried it—did her very utmost. I saw the struggle, and I saw its failure, and I told her so."

"You told her so!"

"Why not? It was well for the poor girl that one human being in all the world should understand and feel for her. And she is determined to marry him?"

"Yes; he is coming back solely with that object."

"How was it that none of his letters spoke of me? Are you quite sure they did not?"

"I am perfectly sure, for she always gave them to me to read."

"Well!" cried he, boldly, as he stood up, and threw his head haughtily back, "the fellow who led Calvert's Horse—that was the name my irregulars were known by—might have won distinction enough to be quoted by a petty Bengal civil servant. The Queen will possibly make amends for this gentleman's forgetfulness."

"You were in all this dreadful campaign, then?" asked she, eagerly.

"Through the whole of it. Held an independent command; got four times wounded; this was the last." And he laid bare a fearful cicatrice that almost surrounded his right arm above the wrist. "Refused the Bath."

"Refused it?"

"Why not. What object is it to me to be Sir Harry? Besides, a man who holds opinions such as mine, should accept no court favours. Colonel Calvert is a sufficient title."

"And you are a colonel already?"

"I was a major-general a month ago—local rank, of course. But why am I led to talk of these things? May I see the girls? Will they like to see me?"

"For that I can answer. But are your minutes not counted? These despatches?"

"I have thought of all that. This sword-cut has left a terrible 'tie' behind it, and travelling disposes to it, so that I have telegraphed for leave to send my despatches forward by Hassan, my Persian fellow, and rest myself here for a day or two. I know you'll not let me die unwatched, uncaared for. I have not forgotten all the tender care you once bestowed upon me."

She knew not what to reply. Was she to tell him that the old green chamber, with its little stair into the garden, was still at his service? Was she to say, "Your old welcome awaits you there," or did she dread his presence amongst them, and even fear what reception the girls would extend to him?

"Not," added he, hastily, "that I am to inflict you with a sick man's company again. I only beg for leave to come out of a morning when I feel well enough. This inn here is very comfortable, and though I am glad to see Onofrio does not recognise me, he will soon learn my ways enough to suit me. Meanwhile, may I go back with you, or do you think you ought to prepare them for the visit of so formidable a personage?"

"Oh, I think you may come at once," said she, laughingly, but very far from feeling assured at the same time.

"All the better. I have some baubles here that I want to deposit in more suitable hands than mine. You know that we irregulars had more looting than our comrades, and I believe that I was more fortunate in this way than many others." As he spoke, he hastily opened and shut again several jewel-cases, but giving her time to glance—no more than glance—at the glittering objects they contained. "By the way," said he, taking from one of them a costly brooch of pearls, "this is the sort of thing they fasten a shawl with," and he gallantly placed it in her shawl as he spoke.

"Oh, my dear Colonel Calvert!"

"Pray do not call me colonel. I am Harry Calvert for you, just as I used to be. Besides, I wish for nothing that may remind me of my late life and all its terrible excitements. I am a soldier tired, very tired of war's alarms, and very eager for peace in its best of all significations. Shall we go?"

"By all means. I was only thinking that you must reconcile yourself not to return to-night, and rough it how best you can at the villa."

"Let me once see my portmanteau in the corner of my old green room, and my pipe where it used to hang beside my watch over the chimney, and I'll not believe that I have passed the last two terrible years but in a dream. You could not fancy how I attach myself to that spot, but I'll give you a proof. I have given orders to my agent to buy the villa. Yes; you'll wake some fine morning and find me to be your landlord."

It was thus they talked away, rambling from one theme to the other, till they had gone a considerable way across the lake, when once more Calvert recurred to the strange circumstance that his name should never have come before them in any shape since his departure.

"I ought to tell you," said she, in some confusion, "that I once did make an effort to obtain tidings of you. I wrote to your cousin, Miss Sophia."

"You wrote to her!" burst he in, sternly; "and what answer did you get?"

"There it is," said she, drawing forth the letter, and giving it to him.

"No claim! no right!" murmured he, as he re-read the lines; "'the name of the person she had dared to inquire after,' and you never suspected the secret of all this indignant anger?"

"How could I? What was it?"

"One of the oldest and vilest of all passions—jealousy! Sophy had heard that I was attached to your niece. Some good-natured gossip went so far as to say we were privately married. My old uncle, who only about once in a quarter of a century cares what his family are doing, wrote me a very insulting letter, reminding me of the year-long benefits he had bestowed upon me, and, at the close, categorically demanded 'Are you married to her?' I wrote back four words, 'I wish I was,' and there ended all our intercourse. Since I have won certain distinctions, however, I have heard that he wants to make submission, and has even hinted to my lawyer a hope that the name of Calvert is not to be severed from the old estate of Rocksley Manor; but there will be time enough to tell you about all these things. What did your nieces say to that note of Sophy's?"

"Nothing. They never saw it. Never knew I wrote to her."

"Most discreetly done on your part. I cannot say how much I value the judgment you exercised on this occasion."

The old lady set much store by such praise, and grew rather prolix about all the con-

siderations which led her to adopt the wise course she had taken.

He was glad to have launched her upon a sea where she could beat, and tack, and wear at will, and leave him to go back to his own thoughts.

"And so," said he, at last, "they are to be married before Christmas?"

"Yes; that is the plan."

"And then she will return with him to India, I take it."

She nodded.

"Poor girl! And has she not one friend in all the world to tell her what a life is before her as the wife of a third—no, but tenth-rate official—in that dreary land of splendour and misery, where nothing but immense wealth can serve to gloss over the dull uniformity of existence, and where the income of a year is often devoted to dispel the ennui of a single day? India, with poverty, is the direst of all penal settlements. In the bush, in the wilds of New Zealand, in the far-away islands of the Pacific, you have the free air and healthful breezes of heaven. You can bathe without having an alligator for your companion, and lie down on the grass without a cobra on your carotid; but, in India, life stands always face to face with death, and death in some hideous form."

"How you terrify me!" cried she, in a voice of intense emotion.

"I don't want to terrify, I want to warn. If it were ever my fate to have a marriageable daughter, and some petty magistrate—some small district judge in Bengal—asked her for a wife, I'd say to my girl, 'Go and be a farm servant in New Caledonia. Milk cows, rear lambs, wash, scrub, toil for your daily bread in some land where poverty is not deemed the "plague;" but don't encounter life in a society where to be poor is to be despicable—where narrow means are a stigma of disgrace.'"

"Joseph says nothing of all this. He writes like one well contented with his lot, and very hopeful for the future."

"Hasn't your niece some ten or twelve thousand pounds?"

"Fifteen."

"Well, he presses the investment on which he asks a loan, just as any other roguish speculator would, that's all."

"Oh, don't say that, Mr. Calvert. Joseph is not a rogue."

"Men are rogues according to their capacity. The clever fellows do not need roguery, and achieve success just because they are stronger and better than their neighbours; but I don't want to talk of Loyd; every consideration of the present case can be entertained without him."

"How can that be, if he is to be her husband?"

"Ah! If—if. My dear old friend, when an if comes into any question, the wisest way is not to debate it, for the simple reason that applying our logic to what is merely imaginary is very like putting a superstructure of masonry over a house of cards. Besides, if we must talk with a hypothesis, I'll put mine, 'Must she of necessity marry this man, if he insist on it?'"

"Of course; and the more, that she loves him."

"Loves him! Have I not told you that you are mistaken there? He entrapped her at first into a half admission of caring for him, and, partly from a sense of honour, and partly from obstinacy, she adheres to it. But she does so just the way people cling to a religion, because nobody has ever taken the trouble to convert them to another faith."

"I wish you would not say these things to me," cried she, with much emotion. "You have a way of throwing doubts upon everything and everybody, that always makes me miserable, and I ask myself afterwards, Is there nothing to be believed? Is no one to be trusted?"

"Not a great many, I'm sorry to say," sighed he. "It's no bright testimony to the goodness of the world, that the longer a man lives the worse he thinks of it. I surely saw the flutter of white muslin through the trees yonder. Oh dear, how much softer my heart is than I knew of! I feel a sort of choking in the throat as I draw near this dear old place. Yes, there she is—Florence herself. I remember her way of waving a handkerchief. I'll answer it as I used to do." And he stood up in the boat and waved his handkerchief over his head with a wide and circling motion. "Look! She sees it, and she's away to the house at speed. How she runs! She could not have mustered such speed as that when I last saw her."

"She has gone to tell Milly, I'm certain."

He made no reply, but covered his face with his hands, and sat silent and motionless. Meanwhile the boat glided up to the landing-place, and they disembarked.

"I thought the girls would have been here to meet us," said Miss Grainger, with a pique she could not repress; but Calvert walked along at her side, and made no answer.

"I think you know your way here," said she with a smile, as she motioned him towards the drawing-room.

NEW WORK BY MR. DICKENS,
In Monthly Parts, uniform with the Original Editions of
"Pickwick," "Copperfield," &c.

Now publishing, PART II., price 1s., of

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

IN TWENTY MONTHLY PARTS.

With Illustrations by MARCUS STONE.

London: CHAPMAN and HALL, 193, Piccadilly.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.